NORMANBURN.

VOL. III.

BARNARD AND FARLEY,
Skinner Street, London.

NORMANBURN;

OR,

THE HISTORY

OF

A YORKSHIRE FAMILY.

A Novel.

BY THE

AUTHOR OF HARDENBRASS AND HAVERILL;
OR, THE SECRET OF THE CASTLE;
REFT ROB, OR THE WITCH OF SCOT MUIR, COMMONLY CALLED MADGE THE SNOOVER,—CONIRDAN, OR THE ST. KILDIANS; AND THE HISTORY OF JULIUS FITZ-JOHN.

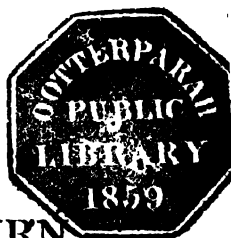
Stultitiæ nomine multa tegit

IN FOUR VOLUMES.

VOL. III.

London:
PRINTED FOR SHERWOOD, NEELY, AND JONES,
PATERNOSTER ROW,
AND SOLD BY EVERY BOOKSELLER IN THE UNITED KINGDOM.

1819.



NORMANBURN.

BOOK VI.

CHAP. I.

A Beau.—New old Friends.

SIR Thistleton Hockham, as we have already related, resolved to step in to the relief of Mabella: how to accomplish this, however, was the difficulty; for Sir Thistleton had not the talent of beginning a conversation, except among his own set, or his sporting companions, when he generally found something to say; but with a perfect stranger, to whom he had no introduction, the case was dif-

ferent, and, as his natural timidity and modesty would affect him in spite of his modern education and fashionable principles, he found himself in a sort of dilemma. He hemmed two or three times pretty loudly for him," and found himself somewhat relieved; then he twirled his watch chain, and happening to think how long it would be to tea, he asked Mrs. Glassington, if he could have the honour to procure her any refreshment. This unexpected attention had all the effect Sir Thistleton could have desired, and, as the lady refused to eat or drink, it brought no trouble in its train. He then made the same offer to Mabella in nearly the same words, and the ice thus broken, he followed it by lamenting, that she seemed resolved not to dance that evening. Mabella bowed her assent to his observation, and he, growing eloquent, added, that, perhaps, like himself, she abhorred English country dances.

"No, indeed, Sir, I do not!" answered she, "I think them very pretty."

"Now I wonder amazingly at that, Ma'am! amazingly; I am astonished, 'pon my soul!" said Sir Thistleton; "for, in my mind, and I flatter myself I have some judgment in the science! there is not on earth so tremendous a bore as an English country dance! all crosses and squares, and elbows and knees, and no soul, the least in the world, in it."

"It is capital exercise, Sir, I think!" said Mrs. Glassington, willing to shew that she approved of dancing, and meaning to imply that she was no enemy to practising it. Sir Thistleton made no reply to this, he only twirled his watch-chain, and half shrugged his shoulders; but he said to Mabella,

"I suppose we shall waltz after tea! do you waltz, Ma'am?"

"No, indeed, Sir," answered Mabella.

"Then, perhaps, you dance quadrilles? these are better than these vile things!

but the tender, swimming waltz is my favourite! I have a horse called Waltz! he'll run at the August meeting!"

"I think he should dance, Sir," said Mabella, half smiling.

This did not please the gentleman, for he felt, as if his horse was too important a subject to be a theme for any thing like jesting, and he remained once more perfectly silent. Mrs. Glassington, being tired with sitting, proposed to Mabella to walk to another part of the room, where they would have a better view of the dance, and she complied, in the hope that she should there escape from the unpleasant looks of Colonel Blowfield and his inseparable companion, Doctor Chinn. They passed down the side of the room, followed by Sir Thistleton, and, after standing a few minutes to look around them, went to a seat behind some ladies, to whom they were strangers, but whose appearance announced a familiarity with good company.

Mrs. Glassington was just observing that they had lost their attendant, who had stopped to speak to a gentleman, when she was converted from a speaker to a listener, by hearing one of the strangers say to the other,

"I think it is not unlikely, for, if they are arrived, our letter would meet them, and they will, of course, bring Cecilia over to us." "I should like to go to the Park very well," said the other lady, "if it was not for the Lightfoots. Mr. Angelo is constantly with the family, and I am resolved I will not put my feelings to so severe a trial, as I know they would undergo. I shall never like one of that name, while there is a Normanburn in existence."

"Hush! hush! somebody will observe you, if you are so warm," said the first that spoke. "You see, my lady has lost all that feeling, and, by her account, young Angelo is quite a paragon! it is, who shall love him best?"

"I have no patience with their folly!" resumed the other; "but do look at Rebecca Chatterer. I declare, I am quite ashamed of her! if our dear Felix were here, I would give him my shawl to cover her with."

"And he would beg to be excused meddling with a Chatterer," answered Mrs. Sarah Bonham, for it was she herself with her worthy sister; "but here is a beau will do it at once, if you have the courage to bid him! Sir Thistleton, how do you bear this crowd? I thought you abhorred English country dances."

"And so I do, on my veracity, my dear ladies! but how came you here?" said Sir Thistleton.

"Do you wish for particulars?" said Mrs. Mary Bonham.

"Particulars! of what?" asked Sir Thistleton.

"Why, of how came we here," said the old lady, "because you shall hear all, if you d."

"Ah! now I see you are developing your science," said the Baronet, with a smile, "but I am no match for you at wit! I am not, upon my soul, Mrs. Mary! you may shake your head, but I would bet five to four you beat me at any time."

"Not unlikely, Sir Thistleton," said Mrs. Sarah, "but we want now to know, who all these people are, for we arrived only to-night."

"Upon my soul, if I can tell, I'll be hanged!" cried the Baronet: "here are the three Chatterers; I suppose you have seen the old lady, and Mrs. O'Shaughlanee that was: she is retired to sooth Captain Gander, who is somehow driven off the field. Then here is the Colonel and his inseparable Chinn, and Snuffmore, and a few more civilized people, besides a huge crowd of brutes and savages, that nobody knows; and I think, that's all."

"Upon my word, quite an alarming sum total!" said Mrs. Mary. "We pro-

pose venturing ourselves a week among these savages, unless suddenly called away. Are you at this house?"

"No,—I am of the other," said Sir Thistleton. "I came to-night to see if there was any waltzing; but, you see! you see! how is it possible to dance such stuff as this. I declare, I should faint! Oh! by the bye! where is Bonham now? and Miss Moleson, too? I suppose they are in town. I'm going to town myself,—a particular business,—must be settled—I shall be at York in the race week of course! I suppose Bonham will be down too; has he a horse runs? I forget!"

"Whether he has or not, we hope he will be with us there," answered Mrs. Sarah; "but, pray, who is that odd-looking young man, that makes such dreadful faces?"

"Oh! don't you know him?" cried Sir Thistleton;" it's Gander,—a very odd, good sort of fellow, though—shall I introduce him?"

"No, for pity's sake!" said Mrs. Mary. "I have a natural horror of all of that family! but how angry he looks; what can be the matter with him? he will soon foam, at the mouth; he is now nearly black in the face."

"Oh! ha! ha!" answered the Baronet, "a ridiculous thing enough! we shall have sport, I believe; I must tell you how it was: he is in a monstrous, amazing rage, I see, and I'll tell you! You see, old Mrs. Chatterer introduced Gander to a very pretty country girl, she has taken, I suppose, under her wing, by way of pushing her, as a partner; and when Gander asked her to dance, I suppose the lady was terrified at the amazing *row* he makes in his throat, for he has a very agreeable stutter; and she declined, and, at last, in answer to his further pressing, she was so ill-bred as to laugh; a sure proof of a country education! and Gander can't forgive her, I suppose! pity, ladies, you were not here! a monstrous good

scene, I declare! all the savages screamed! monstrous good! amazingly good, indeed! I was waiting on the lady, and a queer sort of aunt she has got, but somehow I have lost them."

"Who is she?" asked Mrs. Sarah.

"I think Mrs. Chatterer called her Normanby, or Normanburn, or some such name," said Sir Thistleton. The two ladies looked at each other for a moment, and then said, if the name was Normanburn, they should feel obliged to Sir Thistleton to walk through the rooms with them, and point her out, as they hoped she might prove the grandchild of a lady, for whom they had a high value. Sir Thistleton complying, they rose from their seats, and turned round to see who was behind them, when Sir Thistleton perceived our heroine and her aunt, for the first time, having stood before with his face turned from them: he blushed when he remembered how he had described them; but recollecting how disgraceful

such feelings were to a fine gentleman, he twirled his watch chain (a never failing resource) and said, as composedly as he could, "It is amazingly fortunate, Mrs. Bonham! amazingly! this is the young lady I told you of! but, as I had not the honour of an introduction myself—"

"Oh!" cried Mrs. Mary, "We'll excuse you! Madam, (to Mrs. Glassington) am I right in hoping to find in you and this young lady, the descendants of my friend Mrs. Lucius Normanburn." Mrs. Glassington satisfied her that she was right, and the two worthy sisters expressed so much pleasure at the discovery, and looked so many kind things, that both Mrs. Glassington and Mabella were affected, almost to tears. It was agreed to adjourn to a card-room, in order to give Mrs. Glassington an opportunity of satisfying the curiosity of her newly found friends respecting her family, and Mrs. Mary, offering her arm to Mabella, said,

"Come, my dear Miss Normanburn, you are not the first of that name that has accepted my arm, and I have a presentiment, from certain infallible signs, that I perceive, that we shall be very good friends before the week is out! are you of my opinion?"

"Oh, Madam!" cried Mabella, "how glad I should be to think so! you do me great honour, indeed, to give me such a hope!"

It is asserted by many people, that first impressions are all in all, and that subsequent events can never eradicate them. There is, certainly, some truth in the assertion, for few people forget what was their first impression on any important occasion, even if they have entirely changed their opinion consequent on such an impression. Mrs. Mary Bonham was a woman with a warm heart, and possessed no small share of discernment, and she had great faith in this doctrine of first impressions; she was delighted with the in-

genuous, animated, and sensible countenance of Mabella, and this, added to her remembrance of the hard fate of her grandmother, and her indignant pity at the fallen fortunes of the family, created in her breast an interest for our heroine, such as she had never before felt for any one, not connected with her by the ties of blood. She listened then, as did her sister, to the recital that Mrs. Glassington gave, not in the most concise manner, of all that had befallen the family; and she brought her relation down to the visit to Harrogate, which, she said, was undertaken for Mabella's restoration to health. Happily for our heroine, she omitted all mention of Mr. Lightfoot and the wood scenes, induced to do so, by some expressions the Mrs. Bonhams let fall not very favourable to Mr. Angelo Lightfoot.

CHAP. II.

A friendly Conversation.—Variety.—How Virtue should treat Vice.—Alarms.

When Mrs. Glassington had said all that was necessary, and, indeed, a great deal more, her new friends, in their turn, told her that they would quit Harrogate about the same time she did, as they hoped then to meet some of their friends, with whom they were going to make a visit in the neighbourhood. "While we are here," said Mrs. Mary, "it will be a great pleasure to us to renew the old connexion, and I hope you will give us as much of your time, as is consistent with your other engagements. We are at home in this neighbourhood, and may probably be able to shew you some things worth seeing, though not generally sought after. You have Mrs. Petman in the

house with you, I think! are you intimate with her?"

"Yes, *very*," Mrs. Glassington said; at the same time drawing herself up, as if she derived consequence from the intimacy. "And do you find the young Chatterers agreeable companions, Miss Normanburn?" said Mrs. Sarah to Mabella. "Not very agreeable, Madam," said Mabella, blushing from the fear of being thought envious. The good ladies made no observations on either reply; but they did not forget them. They were two shrewd, sensible women, and by many of their neighbours accused of being severe in their animadversions; but, in reality, they were only just. Even those who complained, seemed well aware that no malice was intended by them, and they made their house so agreeable to visitors, and were so universally respected, that they might be said not to have an enemy in the world. We ought, perhaps, to qualify this assertion, by excepting

those who had been greatly obliged to them, and made an ungrateful return; those individuals, for such there were, alone spoke ill of the Mrs. Bonhams, and felt that they could never forgive them.

Having remained some time in conversation with Mrs. Glassington, whose depth they fathomed without much difficulty, Mrs. Mary said, it was not fair to indulge themselves, and forget that they were preventing Miss Normanburn from dancing, she thought they ought to return to the ball room.

"You are very kind, Ma'am, said Mabella; but don't return on my account, pray! I cannot dance, and I would rather avoid being asked!"

"Are you quite in earnest, my dear," said Mrs. Mary.

"Oh, yes! and do think, ma'am, she offended one Honourable, that asked her, by refusing him first, and then laughing at him!" cried Mrs. Glassington. Mabella looked mortified at this accusation, but

Mrs. Sarah comforted her by the assurance that any young lady might be pardoned for laughing at a modern beau. "But come," said she, "we will, at any rate, return to the field, and see what is going forward there, and, I dare say, we shall find something to amuse us. I really account it an uncommon piece of good fortune to have met with you to night, and, as an old head is sometimes useful to young shoulders, you shall make what use you please of mine."

"Oh dear, ma'am, how kind you are," cried Mabella. "I hope you will let me sit by you all the evening."

"With all my heart!" said both ladies together, and they returned once more to the ball-room.

Near the door by which they entered, and in a corner somewhat apart, stood a group of gentlemen, among whom was Captain Gander, making a speech, which convulsed his hearers with laughter. We have never been able to discover that

what the Captain said was in itself so witty, or so brilliant, as to produce this effect, though, probably, as it consisted chiefly of oaths and expletives, he might think it a very superior effusion! we rather imagine that it was the peculiarity of his manner, and the distortion of his face, that moved the muscles of his hearers. He was inveighing with great bitterness against somebody, and using the words *honour*, *satisfaction*, without much connexion. By his side stood Col. Blowfield, crying, "Right, Captain! d—n me! right!" and Dr. Chinn, without speaking, (he would not countenance duelling) nodded in a sort of approving way. More than one of the bye-standers asked what was the matter? and Gander obligingly attempted to explain, but his organs did not kindly second his good intentions. As the ladies passed the party, the Mrs. Bonhams perceived what was the amusement, and when they had obtained a seat,

Mabella, with a natural frankness, that pleased her new friends very much, told them the particulars of the offence she had given Captain Gander. "Indeed, I am quite ashamed of it," said she, "but when I looked up, he was writhing, and making such horrible faces, that, added to the jug 'jug in his throat, it made me laugh very heartily. I fear Miss Chatterer will be very cross with me about it again, because the gentleman is one of her friends; but, indeed, she ought not! for I could not help it!"

Mrs. Mary smiled at Mabella's apology, and said, that she would learn, by and bye, to command her countenance. "If you do not, my dear, you will be getting into perpetual scrapes, for every fresh party will furnish matter to promote risibility!" continued she.

"Bless me! here is Miss Chatterer squeezing her way to us; I hope she is not come to scold now."

Before Mabella could answer, Miss

Chatterer had pushed, and elbowed her way to the party, and expressed some surprise in her looks, at seeing Mrs. Glassington and her niece, so intimate with the Bonhams, as to be sitting between them; she, however, said nothing about it, but welcomed the two ladies to Harrogate, in her very softest and politest manner.

"Lord, my dear creatures! I had no notion of seeing you here to night!" cried she, "for I never heard that you intended to come! You won't stay, I suppose! This place is detestable! here is hardly a bearable creature, except ourselves, and Mrs. Petman, and a few fellows." "If that is the case, madam, I wonder you make so long a stay here," answered Mrs. Mary: "I think you have been some weeks at Harrogate."

"Oh! as to my staying, that is a matter of compulsion, you know! my health demands it! and yet I have suffered a great deal from one thing or another! I

have been almost killed, I vow, and it is a mercy I'm alive to tell it. Then the girls want society, and all that sort of thing! and Harrogate is better than our humdrum place, at this time of the year. Did you ever see Becky and Charlotte look better than they do to night? Monstrous well, indeed! I believe there is not a man in the room, that has not admired them! as to Snuffmore, there, by the bye, they say he has a monstrous good fortune! he has been running about after Becky, and you see he has got her at last!" said Miss Chatterer.

"I see the poor man is almost blind!" said Mrs. Mary.

"Yes, truly, he is but a sort of a beetle!" answered Mrs Chatterer, "but that's of no consequence, he's desperately in love with our Becky, I can see! he almost pokes his nose into her face."

"And is that a proof of the tender passion, Ma'am?" asked one of the sisters. "Lord! yes, I suppose so!" cried Mrs.

Chatterer, laughing heartily. "He'll certainly make Becky an offer," said she in a lower voice, "if he is not shot to-morrow."

"Shot!" exclaimed all the ladies at once. "Yes, shot! what, Lord bless and preserve me! have not *you* heard? (to Mabella) *you* that made all the quarrel! and I believe on my soul you did it to have it said there was a duel fought about you! Oh! you are a little, artful mouse, Miss!" answered Miss Chatterer; "the truth is, that Snuffmore took your part for laughing at the Honourable Captain Gander! and Gander has challenged Snuffmore, and they are to fight to morrow morning! one of them will be killed, most likely! and Snuffmore has a bad chance, I think! but you'll get your aim! you'll be talked about!"

"Heaven preserve us!" exclaimed Mrs. Glassington; "I hope not! I told you how rude it was, Bell!" while poor Mabella, much shocked, burst into tears,

and begged that she might make an apology to Captain Gander, as she would do any thing to prevent such an affair! so shockingly disgraceful, from taking place. Her new friends, who knew Mrs. Chatterer's chief failing, and did not believe a word of the story of the duel, endeavoured to comfort her; and Mrs. Chatterer having walked off to detail her news elsewhere, Mrs. Mary said, she would seek Sir Thistleton Hockam, and inquire of him what had been done. "Sit still with my sister, my dear, and be composed," said she, "and we will see what can be done to calm these terrible men of war. I dare say, there is no truth in the whole story, for Mrs. Chatterer's talent is well known among her acquaintances, and she delights in mortifying those of whom others think well."

Mrs. Mary then left the party, and almost immediately Mrs. Petman came up.

"My dear, sweet Mabella!" cried she; then seeing Mrs. Sarah Bonham, she offered to take her hand, a favour that lady refused, and to her salutation of, "How rejoiced my heart is to see you, my dear friend!" she replied only by a gentle inclination of her head, without speaking. Mrs. Petman changed colour at this, even through her cosmetics; but it was of some importance to her not to be cut, at this crisis, and she resolved to continue her intimacy with the Bonhams, whether they would or not.

"My dear Mrs. Sarah," said she, "how is my friend Mrs. Mary? is she here?" To this Mrs. Sarah answered not a word, but addressing Mabella, asked her if she did not find it a little warm? Before Mabella could assent, Mrs. Petman spoke again.

"Did you see my dear friend, Miss Sniggins, Mrs. Sarah, before you left York?"

"Madam!" said Mrs. Sarah, gravely,

"you must excuse me, if I decline all conversation with you! both my sister and myself beg to relinquish your society!"

It is impossible to describe Mrs. Petman's look on receiving this rebuff, which was so unlike the general guarded manners of the Mrs. Bonhams, and which was, indeed, given for the sake of Mrs. Glassington and Mabella! evidently, through ignorance, contracting an intimacy that must prove fatal to their reputation. Surprise and mortification, for a short space, kept Mrs. Petman silent; but, at last, she uttered a sort of hysterical giggle, and asked Mabella to give her her arm to the other side of the room.

"Not for the world!" said Mrs. Sarah, before Mabella could reply; "Miss Normanburn will sit with me."

"Impertinent!" cried Mrs. Petman: "I know no right Mrs. Bonham can have to make a school-girl of Miss Nor-

manburn! I have a secret to tell you, my sweet girl," continued she in a whisper to Mabella, "come along with me!"

"Excuse me, Madam, I really cannot," said Mabella! and Mrs. Petman, perceiving Mrs. Mary returning with Sir Thistleton Hockham, was wise enough not to run the risk of a second affront, but moved away with the appearance of great anger.

Mrs. Glassington, who knew so little of Mrs. Petman's story, and had imagined that in contracting an intimacy with her she had done a most advantageous thing, was petrified with astonishment at the cavalier treatment that lady received; she began to ask what she had done? but Mrs. Sarah requested her to defer her inquiries till the morrow, when she would satisfy her that Mrs. Petman was by no means an eligible acquaintance. With this reply, Mrs. Glassington was obliged to be satisfied, for Mrs. Mary

and Sir Thistleton had by this time arrived, and the baronet sat down with the party.

"Well, now, Sir Thistleton, we want you to satisfy us about a foolish story that Miss Chatterer has been telling us," said Mrs. Mary, "and we know very well that you are too well bred to refuse the ladies any request." The baronet bowed, and Mrs. Mary went on. "Is there any foundation for the report that Captain Gander and Mr. Snuffmore are going to fight a duel?"

"Lord bless me! foundation! yes, to be sure, there is!" cried Sir Thistleton, "and Snuffy will have no chance in the world! it is six to four against him."

"Well, then, the matter is all arranged, is it?" asked the lady.

"No, no! I did not say that!" said Sir Thistleton, "but Colonel Blowfield is trying to arrange it, and old Chinn backs all he says! Gander swears tremendously, that he'll have Snuffy's heart's

blood! and the best of it is, Snuffy is dancing, and knows nothing at all about it! It's prime sport! ha! ha! ha!"

"Very fine sport, indeed, Sir Thistleton!" said Mrs. Mary, "and now, do tell me, what all this arose from?"

"I'll be hanged, drawn, and quartered, Ma'am, if I can tell quite exactly," said Sir Thistleton, "but I believe it's about a lady. I beg pardon, but I fancy this young lady is the cause of the strife; she laughed at Gander, as, indeed, was quite natural, and Snuffmore justified her! that is, I am informed, the whole matter, and so Gander, en homme d'honneur, he calls out Snuffy, who never fired a pistol in his life, and, as I said before, it will be prime sport!"

"Oh! it is shocking!" cried Mabella: "pray, do, Sir, try, pray do! to stop that furious Gander! I shall be eternally wretched, if they fight!"

"Pardon me, Madam, but may I die if I can see why!" said Sir Thistleton:

"it will be an eternal feather in your cap, you see, for all the world will say they were both your lovers!".

"Oh! I have no lovers," said Mabella, "for pity's sake stop them. I shall never recover the shock!"

"Well, to oblige you, ma'am, I'll see what can be done," said Sir Thistleton rising, "I'll ask how affairs go on!"

"I'll make an apology to the Captain," said Mabella; "any thing that's proper to be done!"

Sir Thistleton upon this walked off towards the corner where the gentlemen stood, and Mabella's companions tried to pacify her, and begged that she would sit still, and leave it for them to manage; a request she complied with; and her aunt also, for that poor woman was as much terrified as her niece.

In a few minutes the music ceased, and they perceived Mr. Snuffmore leading off his fair partner to the tea room, along with the majority of the company.

They agreed to wait Sir Thistleton's return where they were, and they listened to the sound of Gander's voice, with a very unpleasant sensation of fear. After the lapse of a short time, Colonel Blowfield stalked out, leaving his friend Chinn to guard the honourable Captain, and Sir Thistleton again joined the ladies. He assured them that the Colonel was gone to desire Snuffmore to make an apology, with which the Captain seemed inclined to be satisfied; and, for his own part, he said he had no doubt Snuffy would comply, for he was but a sort of a whey-faced genius. "In the meantime, ladies, I will order you tea here, if you please, for the next room is like a cock-pit!" said he. "I shall be happy to be your attendant, 'pon my soul." Then, without waiting for a reply, he called to a waiter to bring tea, and having said all he had to say, again had recourse to his watch-chain. The ladies looked at each other in silence;

they knew not what steps to pursue, and they watched the door for the return of the Colonel and Mr. Snuffmore. No Colonel, however, returned; and very soon Gander and his companions left the room.

CHAP. III.

The Subject continued.—Judgments.

During the whole time that Sir Thistleton was making tea for the ladies, (and to do him but justice, he performed every part of the ceremony with great exactness) they remained in great suspense and distress, and it was with some difficulty that Mabella could be kept quiet; nothing, indeed, but Mrs. Mary's promise, that she would take steps to have the meeting prevented, kept her so. Tea, however, was concluded, and Sir Thistleton walking off to seek his partner for waltzing, the ladies rose, and went into the tea-room, to observe whether Snuffmore was there or not. They did not perceive him; but this gave them the less alarm, as the rest of the gentlemen were disappearing, and leav-

ing the ladies alone. At one table sat the Chatterers and Mrs. Petman; the latter lady repeating the name of Bonham, more than once, with great bitterness, and the former that of Glassington, with no less scorn. Of all this they took no notice, but continued walking about, till the sound of the fiddles again summoned the company back to the ball-room. To it they returned, hoping to see Sir Thistleton with his partner, and, perhaps, Mr. Snuffmore; but neither appeared, and the waltz began, without so devoted an admirer of its voluptuousness as Sir Thistleton. Sir Thistleton's absence was in some measure a consolation to the two sisters, as they knew him to be a very good-natured young man, who would rather keep the peace than fight himself, and they did not doubt that he was now employed in preventing others from doing so: they sat, then, tolerably composed, watching the entrances, to see him or Snuffmore return;

and Mabella, who had a modest opinion of her own judgment, and a proportionally high one of that possessed by her new friends, tried to persuade herself to believe that there was no danger. She was not, however, easy! She wondered, if Sir Thistleton was employed as a mediator with Captain Gander, why Snuffmore should remain! She knew nothing of the modes of proceeding on such occasions, but she imagined the best way was to separate the parties, and talk to each by himself! and she thought it impossible that two men could be so senseless as to fight, when they had an opportunity of avoiding it. Still, Sir Thistleton did not appear; it grew very late, and she began to dread that the gentlemen might fight, that very evening. By this time Mrs. Bonhams had imbibed the same dread, and they proposed to retire to Mrs. Glassington's room, and to inquire of the landlady, whether the gentlemen were yet in the house. This was imme-

diately done, and the landlady informed them, that several gentlemen, who did not belong to the house, had quitted it, directly after tea; but she did not know who they were. She was sent to ask the waiters, and brought word they were Sir Thistleton Hockham, the Honourable Captain Gander, a poor gentleman that was almost blind, old Colonel Blowfield, and Parson Chinn. "Good heavens! there will be some mischief, I am afraid," cried Mrs. Mary; to which the hostess answered, that it was very likely, for there always was mischief where the Colonel and Parson Chinn meddled; they had ruined more poor girls, and debauched more poor men's wives, than any ten gentlemen in the county. "My good woman, this is no affair of that nature," said Mrs. Bonham. "I fear they have quarrelled, and that any thing fatal should ensue."

"Oh! as to that, Madam!" said the hostess, "as long as they have chose to

go to another house to quarrel, I'm sure I don't care much about it. To have them shooting one another here, after the terrible stir and uproars we had when these ladies first came, would have been the ruin of the concern! for certain it would! I'm sure, one would have thought the old gentleman hisself had come roaring to devour us! Merciful father! it was day after day! always something! but now we are as nicely filled with genteel company, as any house in Harrogate! Nay, to say the truth, our rigler customers are of the first nobility and gentry of the kingdom!" How long she would have run on in this strain, had she not been dismissed, it is impossible to say; but the ladies wished to be alone, and as the dancing had by this time concluded, or nearly so, Mrs. Bonham recommended it to Mrs. Glassington and her niece to go to bed, and promised to see Sir Thistleton, who, she supposed, was at the house they were, and take

every precaution, she might think necessary to prevent a meeting. With this Mabella was obliged to be content, and her two friends ordered their carriage, and after again inquiring for each of the gentlemen, singly, without success, they went to their own residence.

"Well, Bell, my dear!" cried Mrs. Glassington, as soon as they were gone, "what a queer, disagreeable sort of a night we have had! here this ball, that I thought would turn out all in all, and be something for us to talk of at Purlbeck, is nothing but vexation! It is so provoking to go to a ball, and not to dance! if you had not been such a fool, Bell, this duel would never have happened! you might have boasted you had an honourable for your partner! it was a good beginning! but you would not take it! so the next time it is offered you may jump at it! I am so vexed at you, Bell, I could cry."

Mabella was by this time crying in

earnest, and as soon as she could speak, she said she would never go to another ball, if she could help it! the only pleasant thing they had met with, was the finding the Mrs. Bonhams. "Why, as to that!" said Mrs. Glassington, "it happens lucky enough, to night! but they are not the sort of women I like! I never heard any thing so rude as they were to Mrs. Petman, and, whatever she may have done, she is a gentlewoman, as good as them, and ranks before them, for she has been married! and, I'm sure, her conversation is ten times pleasanter!"

"Oh dear no! aunt!" cried Mabella; "she is so very indelicate! I'm sure, if she was a man, I should be quite afraid of her! and I hope you will not be intimate with her now, when Mrs. Bonham says she has acted imprudently."

"If I am, I shall take care not to tell Mrs. Bonham, Bell," said the aunt. "I don't know how it is, but I feel afraid of them, two old maids! they talk as if they

knew every body, and every thing, and I don't like your wise people; they are generally very ill-natured."

"That, at least, is not the case with Mrs. Bonhams," answered Mabella: "I'm sure, nothing could be more kind or good-natured than they have been to me! such a poor, uninformed, ignorant country girl, as I am, aunt! only think of their condescension! and Mrs. Sarah says, she hopes that my papa will some day take me to see them! I really feel as if I could quite love them! they talk to me, as if they were my mother! and now what trouble are they taking about this horrid duel! Oh! I shall never, no, never be happy again, if any gentleman is hurt for my rudeness!"

"Why, now, Bell, that is very foolish in you," said Mrs. Glassington, "how can you help it! and many a girl's fortune has been made by having a duel fought for her. I think it is very likely, that if Angelo heard you had a duel

fought for you, he would make you an offer directly."

Here Mabella's tears were renewed, and she earnestly entreated her aunt not to mention Mr. Lightfoot to Mrs Bonhams, as she was sure they would despise her weakness; and the considerate relative replied, that she might depend upon it she should not talk to such stiff gentlewomen about any love affairs, at all. "I don't know what it is makes me afraid of them," added she, "but I certainly don't quite like to talk to them, and I shall neither tell nor ask them any thing. Ah, Bell! we have made badly out at Harrogate! I did intend to get a husband, certainly! and, I believe, never, was such bad luck seen, as mine! there I must go back to Purlbeck, I suppose, unless these friends of my mother should ask me, and I should rather almost go with any body, than such strait laced bodies."

After much conversation of a similar

description, and which served to convince Mabella, that the suspicion she could not help occasionally entertaining, that her aunt was not a very sensible woman, (a suspicion her short acquaintance with Mrs. Bonhams had strengthened, by affording a comparison) was true, the two ladies fell asleep, but at so late an hour, and after so much exhaustion, that they continued in that happy state of forgetfulness, till near eleven o'clock the following morning; when, perceiving by the sun that the day was far advanced, they hurried to dress themselves. While they were thus employed, the names of the Mrs. Bonhams were announced, and those two ladies entered, apologizing for their intrusion at so unseasonable an hour, by their desire to set Miss Normanburn's heart at rest about the duel. They were soon accommodated with chairs, and Mrs. Sarah begging her sister to begin, that good lady related what will be found in the next chapter.

CHAP. IV.

A friendly Visit.—A Duel.—More Variety.

"WELL, my dear ladies!" cried Mrs. Mary, "I know that you have been in some alarm, and I am happy to bring you a true and particular account of all the running horses with the names and colours of the riders, as our public orators say in the race week. In the first place, then, the meeting is over, and nobody hurt! and having so far premised, I will begin in order, and tell you all that

"Then they did fight, ma'am, did they?" cried Mabella.

"Nay, nay! you must be patient, Miss Normanburn," said Mrs. Mary, "and let me go on my own way! old women, you know, love to talk, and when they happen to be old maids, it is sometimes

dangerous to put them out of their way." Here Mrs. Glassington tossed her head with an air of superiority, at which her visitors could hardly help smiling, and for which her niece blushed. No notice, however, was taken, and Mrs. Mary continued.

"When we left you last night, we returned to our Inn, being fully persuaded that we should hear of the tremendous men of war there, and, on inquiry, we found that they all actually lodged in the house, and that they were then assembled in a room together. We asked if there was any magistrate of the West-riding there, and were told that there was our old acquaintance, Mr. Makepeace, who, however, was gone to bed, and probably fast asleep. Knowing his infirm health, we were unwilling to disturb him, and the first step we took was to send a note to Sir Thistleton to beg to speak to him, for a single moment. A waiter delivered it to him, at the door, and brought

back his compliments, and he would attend us in five minutes. To us, you may be sure, these five minutes, which he made fifteen, appeared very long; but, as we had no apprehension of an immediate action, and as the parties, being in the house, could be seized and bound over before morning, we reined in our impatience, as well as we could. You may guess our horror, my dear ladies, when, at the end of the time I have mentioned, we distinctly heard the report of pistols, and the sudden movement of several people, as if running to the scene of action! We were not long, however, kept in suspense, for Sir Thistleton made his appearance, and after an exordium, consisting chiefly of declarations admirably varied, that it was prime sport! monstrously amazing sport! excellent sport! and so forth, he informed us in his own way of what I shall now tell you.

It seems, that Colonel Blowfield and his friend Dr. Chinn had determined to

provoke Captain Gander to fight, being fully persuaded, that Mr. Snuffmore would prove dunghill, as Sir Thistleton alled it. When the Colonel left the ball room, he carried the Captain's challenge to Mr. Snuffmore, who vowed and swore that, so far from wishing to give offence to Captain Gander, he hardly should know him again, if he saw him, and that his exclamation of, "Is that all!" was meant only to express how little he should himself care for being laughed at. That he was willing to tell the Captain so, and to mak any apology becoming a gentleman.

This answer was communicated to Doctor Chinn, who was the soul of the plot, though he made the Colonel his stalking horse, indeed, the poor Colonel has no ideas of his own, though abundance of inclination to do mischief under the command of the Reverend Doctor Chinn. Instead, then, of the real answer, Doctor Chinn dictated another; and, by this time, Sir Thistleton and one or two more having

joined Chinn, they were persuaded to promote what they call amazing sport. The Captain then was told that Mr. Snuffmore only laughed, and said he was ready to give the honourable gentleman immediate satisfaction, at the distance of six paces, and that Sir Thistleton would attend him to the field. The Colonel offered to do the like favour for the Captain, and said, as things were so happily settled, the sooner it was over the better.

And now, as Doctor Chinn had suspected, the Captain exhibited strong symptoms of fear, and said he was persuaded, that as Mr. Snuffmore only laughed at the challenge, he could not have meant in earnest to offend him. Doctor Chinn told him he wished it was so! but his friend, the Colonel, declared that there was now no opportunity of stopping proceedings, and that Mr. Snuffmore having accepted the challenge, the business must be settled on the field. Gander was so agitated, that he literally

could not articulate: and Snuffmore, informed that his foe was implacable, was little better. The two combatants were dragged, rather than accompanied, to the R——, and, as neither was sufficiciently composed to utter a coherent sentence, each fancied his antagonist dumb with rage and indignation. Large drops of perspiration burst from their pores, and rolled down their faces, while the Colonel and Sir Thistleton measured the ground, and loaded the pistols, into which they put only a charge of powder, and it being determined that both gentlemen should fire at once, each second did his utmost to encourage his man. Sir Thistleton says the room shook with their agitation; but at last they were so far recovered as to be able to fire, which they had no sooner done, than they both dropped, as if desperately wounded, and were conveyed to their beds, having declared that they were dead men.

You may be sure that we were abun-

dantly satisfied that this mischievous plot had no worse a termination, though I cannot but own I am a little sorry Miss Normanburn's name should be so publicly mentioned in a place like this, and in such an affair. However, it will soon blow over, I dare say! at least, I hope so. I hear this morning that both gentlemen are as well as can be expected, and by a side whisper we have been informed, that the poor chambermaid is the only person that has any reason to complain."

Mrs. Glassington expressed her pleasure that no mischief had really happened to either of the gentlemen; but, as to Miss Normanburn being mentioned, she said, she did not see what harm it could do her to be mentioned, especially as every body knew she was a stranger to both gentlemen. "*We* know that, Madam!" said Mrs. Sarah, "but there are many people, who will hear the story, and that with all the additions of malice and envy, and who cannot possibly know

more than they are told. I think it is always a painful thing to hear the name of a very young lady coupled with any thing like a duel."

"Well, really, now, Mrs. Sarah, I cannot see that!" cried Mrs. Glassington almost pettishly; "one is sure a woman is beautiful, if she is worth fighting for!" To this the visitors made no reply; they saw Mabella looked mortified, and was ready to weep, and they changed the conversation, by asking if the ladies had yet visited Knaresborough, or Studley? Finding that they had not seen any thing in the neighbourhood, Mrs. Bonham asked if it would be agreeable to them to ride over to Knaresborough after breakfast, dine there, and return home in the evening? and receiving a joyful assent, they sent orders to their coachman to bring the carriage at half past twelve, and then went down stairs with our heroine and her aunt.

Mrs. Glassington was sufficiently pleas-

ed to have a ride, as she called it; but feeling a degree of constraint in the presence of her new friends, she would rather they should have left her till the time of departure: however, as she could not help herself, she was obliged to be content. Mabella, who dreaded Mrs. Petman and Miss Chatterer, felt as if the Mrs. Bonhams were a protection to her, and she rejoiced at their stay, accordingly.

As the morning was fine, the company, with a very few exceptions, were out, and breakfast was almost concluded, when Mrs. Petman entered from an early promenade. At first, she seemed inclined to salute the party, but, as the Mrs. Bonhams looked another way, she thought it more advisable to avoid such a public rebuff from Mrs. Mary, as Mrs. Sarah had given her the night before; she sat down then by a gentleman, who was reading a pamphlet, at no great distance from our friends, and asked him if he had heard

how poor Captain Gander was, after his duel. "Duel, ma'am! what duel?" cried the old gentleman, vexed to be disturbed by Mrs. Petman, whom he knew well.

"Oh dear, Munn, have not you heard that he killed young Snuffmore, and received a bullet through his lungs? They say he'll never be able to talk again to be understood!" cried the lady, in a piteous whine of compassion.

"Umph! no great loss to his hearers! he never could speak like a human being!" said Mr. Munn.

"Well, now, Mr. Munn, you seem quite hard hearted, and obdurate!" cried the lady: "but won't he be hanged for the murder, do you think?" "If he is, according to your account, Madam, he'll never be able to make a confession!" said Mr. Munn, turning his shoulder a little round, to signify to Mrs. Petman that he wished to be alone. This the lady would not see; she went on. "I hear that all the surgeons in the neigh-

bourhood have examined him, and they give no hopes of preserving his valuable life, except Doctor Drain, who providentially arrived to bleed a patient on his way to a house where he is sent for express! He says he has one chance! copious bleeding!"

"Umph, a fine chance, truly!" cried Mr. Munn.

"They say that bleeding is a most excellent remedy for most constitutions, Mr. Munn," said the lady. "Umph! yes—especially for wanton widows, Madam!" cried Munn, rising from his chair, and quitting the room. Mrs. Petman sat still, perspiring with rage, while Mrs. Glassington started at hearing such an affront so publicly given, and began to think that Mrs. Petman must really have been indiscreet, to draw forth such an insult, uttered, too, in so marked a manner. As to Mabella, she blushed crimson, and her new friends were not sorry that she should hear in what estimation Mrs.

Petman was held. And now, as breakfast was over, the ladies retired to put on their bonnets and pelisses, and when they reached their own room, Mrs. Glassington begged in a very earnest manner that she might know what Mrs. Petman had done, that first one, and then another attacked her; and Mrs. Sarah imparted to her in reply, all that the reader already knows. When she had done, Mrs. Glassington thanked her; but said, that, she dare-say, so genteel a woman as Mrs. Petman had enemies among her own sex, and it was plain she had, or Mrs. Chatterer, who had nieces to settle in the world, would not be so intimate with her, if all this was true! for her part, she pitied her very much. "Pity is an amiable feeling," said Mrs. Mary, "but I would not waste it on Mrs. Petman, Madam! I assure you, she does not deserve it! and for Miss Normanburn's sake, I trust that Miss Chatterer's example will not induce you to cultivate any intimacy

with that woman. Indeed, Mrs. Glassington, she is a disgrace to her sex!"

"Well! I can't see, because she has been unlucky, and cheated by a villain, why she should be so abused!" said Mrs. Glassington perversely. "I must say, I pity her, and *I* could not behave rudely to her for the world. Poor woman! I must say again, *I* pity her! she can at least do *me* no harm!"

"Why, I don't know that," answered Mrs. Mary, gravely: "a young, beautiful and bewitching female is always very liable to receive injury from an unfortunate connexion!" This speech restored Mrs. Glassington to good humour with Mrs. Mary, whom she thenceforth set down, as a very sensible, discerning woman, and she resolved to consider the matter over again, before she exposed herself to the world's censure! she determined not to spoil her own fortune!

CHAP. V.

A Visit to Knaresborough.—A country Walk.—Modern Love, and prudent Connexions.

During her ride to, and her visit at Knaresborough, Mabella felt as if she was in a new world, for her present companions were well read in history and antiquities, and contrived to give an interest to the ruins, and the rocks, and the Hermitage, and the Dropping Well, that they would not have had to an uninformed mind, without such an accompaniment. They kindly expatiated on every subject, because they perceived that their young companion listened with anxious attention to all they said; and they could not help regretting, that a mind, which seemed so peculiarly adapted for cultivation, and so desirous to gain knowledge, should have been deprived of what is so

often thrown away. That Mabella was aware of her own deficiency, they easily perceived; for when, as they stood by St. Robert's chapel, Mrs. Sarah said, "You know, my dear, I dare say, that St. Robert lived in the reign of our first Richard." Mabella blushed deeply, and answered, "No, Ma'am, I really did not know that, nor do I recollect in what year Richard died: I believe it is that king drawn with his foot on a lion; I know I have seen his picture."

"Did you ever read a good History of England?" asked Mrs. Mary.

"No, indeed, Ma'am, I never saw any but a child's History of England!" said Mabella.

Mrs. Bonhams were too well bred, and too considerate, to make any observation to Mabella, or her thoughtless aunt, on what they justly thought a great omission in her education; but, perhaps, this little avowal, and a certain liking they had taken to Mabella, on account of her

resemblance to her grandmother, first suggested to their benevolent minds the idea of a proposal, which we shall notice by and bye. They took care that every spot worth visiting; and every prospect worth viewing, should be seen; and they purchased some of the best of the petrifactions and fossils the place afforded, and told Mabella they hoped they might be the beginning of a collection, which would afford her pleasure. Though they had many friends in the neighbourhood, they would not call upon any one, but dedicated the whole day, and a delightful evening, to their new protegés. They dined and drank tea at Knaresborough, and arrived at Harrogate, after a delightful ride by moonlight, about ten o'clock. Mabella was exhausted with the walking exercise she had taken, with the extraordinary attention she had exerted, and with the pleasure she had experienced, and she begged her aunt to allow her to go directly to bed. Mrs.

Glassington being herself weary, complied.

On the following morning, they walked after breakfast to the R——, to call on the Bonhams, and found them in a private apartment. They learnt that the two terrible combatants were quite recovered from their fright, and very tame and unobtrusive; and that Mabella need not fear any thing further, as it was pretty well understood among the company at the different houses, that the duel had been got up entirely by Colonel Blowfield and Dr. Chinn. "We have discovered," said Mrs. Mary, "that many of our acquaintances are here, and some of them are very agreeable people. I shall be glad if you will give us leave to introduce you to them, and if you will pass the day and the evening with us. We shall have a party in this room, free from the intrusion of the multitude, and I long to make all the advantage possible of the short time we shall be together!"

Mrs. Glassington was too highly flattered with this attention not to be pleased with it, and she began to fancy that Mrs. Bonhams were particularly taken with her conversation, and that it was for her sake they thus exerted themselves: then she remembered what Mrs. Mary had said about a young, beautiful, and bewitching female, and she thought they probably might invite her to visit them in the winter at their house in York. All this put her in high good humour, both with them and herself, and she agreed to whatever was proposed. They sallied forth to the Library, where Mrs. Bonhams purchased a small pocket volume of Miscellaneous Poems, and some stationary, Here they saw several people, whose names Mabella had learnt from the subscription book, but to whom she was otherwise a stranger. Many of them addressed the Mrs. Bonhams, and to a few those ladies introduced Mrs. Glassington and Miss Normanburn. A

country walk was proposed and agreed to; and Sir Thistleton Hockham coming in at the moment of departure, said, he would have the honour of being their escort. "It's a mercy, though, that I'm alive to be your guard," said he, "for Snuffy is very wrath at the trick we played, and he talked yesterday of fighting in good earnest. It's all a puff though, I suppose! it would be too bad to shoot a man for saving one's life, 'pon my veracity, it would! no sport at all in that! would there, Miss Normanburn?"

"Oh dear no, Sir Thistleton! I should be wretched, indeed, if such an accident was to happen!" cried poor Mabella, thinking that she had been the original cause of the quarrel. She spoke with great earnestness, and with an expression of interest, and a tone of feeling, that in a moment convinced Sir Thistleton, she had fallen in love with him. At first, as Mabella was certainly very beautiful, he felt a little tickling sensation of joy; but

this was soon checked by the recollection, that, as she was a friend of the Bonhams, and, of course, well connected, he could not derive any further gratification from the incident, than as, it was a compliment to his perfections. Indeed, Sir Thistleton, being a young baronet with a good landed estate, had met with so much admiration both from old and young, that he was now difficult to please, and, being fond of horses and cocks, he had come to a determination not to fetter himself with a wife, who might probably interfere in his pleasures. He was a determined bachelor, and had been lucky enough to suit himself admirably in a mistress, for whom he provided liberally, and who always moved about, as he moved.

This young woman was the daughter of a groom, and, inheriting her father's love for horses, she had, from the earliest age, been in the habit of riding them. First, she sat astride the neck, and held by the mane, then she sat sideway on the

bare back, and before she was ten years old, there was not a horse in the stables, that she would not mount. The jockies admired her spirit, and at the age of sixteen, their instructions had been so successful, that she was pronounced equal to the best, and able to ride any match that could be proposed.

Sir Thistleton had long admired her qualifications, and he now liked her person. His proposals were accepted without much hesitation, and Mrs. Tibson (for so she was called) became a regular part of his establishment. She was, at this present time, in private lodgings at Harrogate, with her little girl and two servants, and every day rode out accompanied by a majority of the male equestrians of any fashion in the place. The reader will not wonder that Sir Thistleton Hockham, with a companion, whose mind was so congenial to his own, should preserve his determination not to marry! that is not at all surprising!

nor, perhaps, is it more so, that when any very pretty girl came in his way, he did not scruple to bestow his admiration on her: but this was only when the said girl was what he called comeatable, and he carefully avoided all particular attentions to young ladies of reputation, family, or fortune, as such are in search of husbands, and but too apt to catch at every young man with such enviable qualifications as Sir Thistleton's. It is not wonderful, then, that the conviction that crossed the mind of Sir Thistleton, that Miss Normanburn felt what he called a *tendre* to him, and that she was in herself very desirable, threw him into a sort of reverie: he swore to himself, that it was a thousand pities she was so well connected! by Jove, it was! but it could not be helped! and the Chatterers appearing at this moment with a crowd of young and old men in attendance, among whom were the Colonel, Dr. Chinn, Gander, and Snuffimore, the

current of his ideas was changed, and he thought no more about her.

The two ladies halted when they met, and while the young Chatterers asked Mabella, where she was going? Mrs. Bonham asked the Colonel, if his lady and daughters were in Harrogate? he said they were coming, he fancied, in a day or two, but he knew nothing about women's motions, he had enough to do to regulate his own.

Captain Gander avoided looking at Mabella, and to shew how much his attention was engaged, he began, or attempted to begin to utter a polite nothing to Miss Charlotte. Not a word, however, came forth, and Mrs. Chatterer, putting her hand up, as if she would have placed it on his writhing mouth, cried, "For God's sake, my dear Gander, be quiet! why, if you go on this way, we shall have another duel!" then, seeing Mrs. Tibson gallop by, she asked Sir Thistleton ma-

liciously, who that fine female jockey was?

"Upon my veracity, I can't tell," said Sir Thistleton; "I did not look at her!"

"Then you are a look in her debt," returned the dauntless Chatterer, "for she eyed you sharply enough." At this the young ladies tittered, and tossed their heads, the gentlemen looked demure, and Snuffmore, putting up his glass, cried, "I wish I could see; what a great deal I lose!" And now the parties separating, the Mrs. Bonhams, who had heard of the affair, would willingly have passed it over; but Mrs. Glassington, with her usual want of caution, said, "I should like myself to know who that lady is; she rides surprisingly well! I think she must have been well taught, somewhere!" Then, in a half whisper to Mrs. Sarah, she added, "I do believe she is somebody's good-for-nothing, for I never saw a woman

with her in my life; plenty of men! Why she has not been here above four or five days, I think!"

"Hush! hush!" answered Mrs. Sarah, and "hush! hush!" said another lady or two. As to Sir Thistleton, he twirled his watch-chain rather quickly, and they proceeded some way in almost total silence. They soon arrived at Cony-Garth, an old Saxon enclosure, or encampment, from whence they proceeded to Gateshill, a much larger one. The view from this place particularly delighted Mabella; she could have staid hours to watch the change of light on the objects before her, and the sight of the Nidd, and the beautiful vale through which it runs, gave her great delight. Though this place was only a pleasant walk from Harrogate, she and her aunt had never reached it; one thing or other had always prevented them. She wondered why this had been; but she could not solve her own wonder. At

length the party returned home in time to dress for dinner, and our two ladies repaired to the R——, to keep their engagement.

CHAP. VI.

Mabella alarmed.—A kind Offer.—How received.—True Friends.

NOTHING worth recording took place during the early part of the day, except, indeed, the pleasure Mabella received from a very agreeable party, chiefly consisting of some members of neighbouring families, with whom Mrs. Bonhams were upon terms of friendly intimacy. All of them had long known the hard fate of the Normanburns, and they treated Mrs. Glassington and her lovely niece with the most gratifying respect and attention, justly regarding them as the victims of infernal malice. The evening proved uncommonly warm for the season, and induced them to have a window open, near which sat Mabella with two

ladies, while the rest of the party were playing cards. Several new equipages arrived at Harrogate; among the rest, one that was particularly elegant, and somewhat singular: it attracted their attention, and one lady observed, that it was not properly furnished, as one gentleman only was in it. "Oh!" said another, looking after it, "I know the arms; depend upon it, it is Mr. Lightfoot!"

Mabella started, and looked shocked; her aunt bit her lips, and the lady, who had spoken, perceiving the dismay she had occasioned, made a sort of aukward apology for her indiscretion. This gave rise to conjectures, whether, if it was Mr. Angelo, as they did not doubt it was, he was come to stay at Harrogate, or only to pay a visit to some of his friends, and Mrs. Bonham inclined to the latter opinion; observing, that, in all probability, he would not remain above a day or two. "But," continued she, "Sir This-

tleton Hockham knows him: he is a goodnatured creature, who tells all he hears, and I will inquire what he knows about him. I can easily imagine, from my own feelings, how painful it would be to my friends here to meet him; and, if he is coming to stay at Harrogate, I shall beg them to enter into a little plan we have imagined, and to carry it into execution immediately."

Mrs. Glassington, who thought it would be no bad thing for Mabella to meet Lightfoot, was only half pleased at this, but she said nothing; while Mabella, almost overwhelmed with her own emotions, and ashamed of their source, sat the image of distress. Mrs. Bonham rung the bell, and sent her man to beg the favour of Sir Thistleton Hockham's company for half an hour. The man brought word that Sir Thistleton was out. There was then nothing but patience for the ladies, and, just as the carriages of the visitors were announced

(for it was now twilight) Sir Thistleton, with two or three other gentlemen, was seen walking by.

"Oh!" cried the lady, who had spoken before, "it is Mr. Angelo! there he is with Sir Thistleton!"

Mrs. Glassington put out her head to look at him; but an envious chariot prevented her view, while Mabella covered her face, and trembled exceedingly. The visitors took leave, and Mrs. Glassington longing to meet Mr. Angelo, would have done the same; but her friends pitied Mabella, too much, (they mistook the cause of her emotion) and begged her not to move, till they could hear at what house Mr. Angelo stopped. They suggested the possibility of his being at that which Mrs. Glassington herself occupied, and that it would be better to know before she returned home.

To this, and many importunities, Mrs. Glassington yielded, and in about half an hour Sir Thistleton and his companion

having entered the R——, the former received Mrs. Bonham's message, and almost immediately waited upon her. He confirmed the news that the stranger was no other than young Lightfoot, who was, he said, an amazing extraordinary clever fellow, and quite the thing in the first circles; and he said he was come for two or three days to the ———, just to see whether there was any body worth looking at, till the arrival of the Sniddys at Brushwood Park. "He has preceded them," continued the Baronet, "that it might not seem too particular, his coming down with them, I mean; and he says, the whole party will be at the Park next Sunday."

"Well! then, we have almost a week before us to wander in," answered Mrs. Bonham, "for my niece will certainly not be here before the rest of the family. Mr. Angelo is one of your friends, Sir Thistleton?"

"Oh! yes—a very intimate friend!

why, he's quite a first-rate!" answered Sir Thistleton; and then, after a few unmeaning phrases, he withdrew. And now Mrs. Bonham told Mrs. Glassington, that she and her sister had projected making a little tour, and, as the delay that had taken place in the movements of the Brushwoods made it perfectly feasible, they would now carry the project into execution. "Our intention," said the good lady, "is to go only as far as Ripon, where we have some friends, and to stop to visit every place and every thing worth seeing. We shall take a peep at Boroughbridge, because three miles from it lives our friend Mrs. S——, and we think that the five days we allow ourselves will be pretty well occupied. And now we mean to ask you to accompany us. All our friends will receive you with particular pleasure; you will have an opportunity of seeing, not only the *shew* parts of houses and grounds usually thrown open to visitors, but of

examining at your pleasure the interior; and, what is of still more consequence to Miss Normanburn, you will thus be forming an acquaintance with worthy and enlightened individuals in your own rank of life; people who are an honour to their station, and whose virtues make the vices and follies of the Petmans and the Chatterers only the more conspicuous."

The reader will not wonder so much as Mrs. Bonham did, that so kind an offer should be accepted with a degree of hesitation, that seemed to proceed rather from a doubt how to refuse than how to comply. Mabella did not speak; she, of course, left the reply to her aunt, who was debating in her own mind the advantages and disadvantages of either staying or going. She looked upon this last week at Harrogate as of great importance, for, as the company was continually fluctuating, she thought there was yet a chance for her to strike a blow in

the marrying line; and she considered taking Mabella away at the very moment that Angelo arrived, as flying in the face of Providence. She hemmed and hesitated, and said nothing decisive; and Mrs. Bonham, who could not well divine the true cause of her hesitation, thought it proceeded either from a fear of extra expense, or from delicacy, and a dislike to intrude on strangers. In order to do away these fears, they proceeded, with great delicacy, to state, that their barouche accommodated four very comfortably, and that Fondwell might ride with the coachman. As to Mrs. Sarah's maid, Stocking, she might go on a visit to her relations, who lived in the neighbourhood. The distances being all so small, nothing more than a pleasant airing, they should not require any addition to their own horses, and they thought, as neither of the ladies drank the water, the advantages to their health would be much greater than those

they would have, if they remained at Harrogate.

While they were saying this, Mrs. Glassington came to a resolution, and catching at the last observation, she said, to be sure Mabella did not drink the waters, and she thought it would be just the thing for *her*; but, as to herself, she had been advised not to neglect the chalybeate, while she staid, and, as health was of the first importance, she thought she ought to remain at Harrogate; but Bell might go, if she liked, and if the ladies would take the trouble of her, for a few days.

The Mrs. Bonhams felt a little surprised; but, as Mabella accepted this ungracious permission with evident pleasure, they forbore to press her aunt further; they agreed to set off the following morning after breakfast, and to be at Harrogate on the evening of Saturday: but if not, they said, they would write to Mrs. Glassington. Our friends then took

leave for the night, and returned to their apartment. Mrs. Glassington had no sooner shut the door for the night, than she began to abuse the Mrs. Bonhams for what she called their meddling plans, when, as she said truly enough, she could not see what interest they could have in keeping Angelo out of the way of the Normanburns. She told Mabella, she was a great fool for consenting to go with two such fusty, stiff old maids, looking at houses, and trees, and water, just when God Almighty had sent Lightfoot in her way: however, *she* should remain, and see what could be done. "I hope, aunt," said the weeping Mabella, "that nothing will be done about Mr. Angelo Lightfoot. You heard what Sir Thistleton Hockham said about the Lady Sniddy, and most likely he is paying his addresses to one of them! Besides, if he was not—what right have I to expect that he would think of me? and, if he did, my father would rather kill me, than

see me his wife. I am resolved never willingly to come in his way! and I think this kind offer of the Mrs. Bonhams is quite providential! I would rather go any where, than meet Mr. Lightfoot! I know, by my feelings to-night, that I should behave so foolishly! and, perhaps, get talked about here! my heart aches now! it feels too large for my bosom!"

It was, perhaps, lucky for Mabella, that her aunt, instead of soothing her, and persuading her to stay, scolded her heartily for being such a fool! Mabella resented this in her own mind, and was thus strengthened in her resolution to avoid Lightfoot! a resolution that she thought originated solely in a sense of duty, but, which, in fact, was rather prompted by despair and resentment. She thought, after what he had said to her, he ought to have sought her out—his not doing so was decisive! yet, had her aunt pressed or commanded, she would have given up her excursion! she did neither, and the

clothes were all packed ready for the morrow before Mabella lay down on that pillow that afforded her no repose till daybreak, when she fell into a slumber. Her aunt rose early, and, when they went down to breakfast, left every thing in readiness for the arrival of the Mrs. Bonhams. Breakfast passed in almost total silence, for Mabella was absent and melancholy, and retired, the moment she had finished. By ten o'clock, the carriage was at the door, and she was soon on her way to G— Park, where her friends told her they should dine, and then in the cool of the evening proceed to —— to sleep.

"Well, my dear Miss Normanburn! bless me, how ill you look this morning!" said Mrs. Sarah; "I hope nothing unpleasant has occurred! have you your aunt's free leave to go with us?"

"Yes, indeed, Ma'am," returned Mabella, "but I am not quite well! at times, I do not feel so—a little variety will do

me good! and I am so happy to be with you, who know every thing, and every body!" The ladies smiled at this artless effusion, and told her, that all things great or small were by comparison.

"I am almost glad that we shall have you to ourselves, for a few days," said Mrs. Mary; "you will then judge better whether you like us or not, than you can possibly do in a mixed society. The sight of you, so like your unfortunate grandmother! carries us back to the days of our youth, and, as we said before, we wish to cement the old family friendship. You never saw that young man, Mr. Angelo Lightfoot, I think, my dear?" To this Mabella could not reply—truth naturally pressed to her lips, but modesty restrained it! She looked foolish and distressed. "Come, come, sister," cried Mrs. Sarah, "don't let us talk of disagreeables, rather let us tell Mabella, for so I must call her, when we are alone, what and whom she is going to see.

G— Park is a very pretty place, with a very excellent house, and contains many things worth seeing; but we intend only to give you a peep at it, for you must see Studley and Hackfall. The owner of G—— is at present on the Continent with his family, and the house is occupied by a widow lady, a distant connexion of Lady G——'s, who is an old acquaintance of ours. She is somewhat of an oddity; but, withal, a very sensible woman, and certainly has, I think, more talent than any other female I ever met with. Her usual residence is in Hampshire; but she likes to vary the scene, and is come down to G——, for six months. I wish you to know her, because there is a great pleasure in knowing extraordinary characters, and, sometimes, great advantage to be gained by assotiating with them."

"Well, but my dear sister, you will make Miss Normanburn think we shall propose Mrs. Faraday to her as an example to form herself on, if you talk in

this way!" cried Mrs. Mary, "when, in truth, except as to her talents, and the pains she has taken to cultivate them, I should not think the model a favourable one for a modern young lady. However, we shall see what Miss Normanburn herself thinks about her, and I hope she will observe minutely, and report faithfully, her own sensations." In this and similar conversation the ride passed, and they soon entered G—— Park, and drove up to the door of a superb mansion.

CHAP. VII.

A new Introduction.—The Force of Imagination.—Account of Miss Moleson and her Lover.

Miss Normanburn followed her friends into an elegant drawing-room, where they found Mrs. Faraday sitting on a sofa, with a book in her hand, while on the other end of the sofa were laid a cocked hat, a superb sword, and a pair of gloves.

Mrs. Faraday was a little woman, tolerably well proportioned, with plain, though expressive features, and appeared to be about the age of forty-five. Her style of dress, however, which was that of twenty years back, made her look, perhaps, older than she really was. She no sooner heard the names of her friends announced, than she shut her book, and advanced to meet them with the most

friendly and agreeable air imaginable. After the first salutations, Mabella was introduced to her, as the grandchild of that Mrs. Normanburn, whose virtues and whose hard fate she had so often heard commemorated. She took Mabella's hand, and, after surveying her a few moments with apparent satisfaction, she kindly pressed it, and said, "May you be happy, my dear Miss Normanburn! It is a singular pleasure to me to see you here!" She then placed Mrs. Mary on that part of the sofa, where she herself had been sitting, and Mrs. Sarah and Mabella took chairs. "I was reading to the General, when you came in," said Mrs. Faraday, "for it is too warm to walk, just in the heat of the day! It will be much pleasanter for us to enjoy good conversation, though! for that is not every day to be met with."

"Reading to the General!" and "pleasanter for us both!" thought Mabella—"what can this mean? Here was

nobody but herself present! and they said she was a widow! what General does she mean? she must mean something, and Mrs. Bonhams seem to know what, for they don't look surprised!"

Mrs. Faraday then rang the bell, and ordered luncheon, observing, that, though she and the General always dined early, she thought a little refreshment would be very agreeable after their ride. The conversation that succeeded was very amusing; the Bonhams related many circumstances connected with people Mrs. Faraday knew, and she detailed, somewhat at length, curious occurrences, that had happened during the excursions the General and herself had made. She said, they were very comfortable at G——, as they were uninterrupted in their pursuits by any of the neighbouring families, who, it seemed, kindly considered them mad, because they kept early hours, and regularly pursued their studies. She said, she should return to Faraday Hall

in September, as she hoped, by that time, to enjoy her son's society, and, if he persisted in his resolution not to marry, she should remain there; if, as she hoped, he would take a wife, she had a residence in his neighbourhood in her eye.

The arrival of the luncheon interrupted the conversation, and the guests having partaken of it, Mrs. Faraday put some fruit on a plate, and set it apart, as if for somebody she expected. Conversation again occupied the time till dinner, which was announced exactly at two, and they found it served in a handsome dining-room.

When Mabella saw five plates and knives, she expected to see the General appear, but she was disappointed! the hat, gloves, and sword, were in the chair at the bottom of the table, but no General was present. One servant waited behind Mrs. Faraday's chair, and another behind the empty chair, and he took care to change the unused plate with great

regularity, as the different dishes appeared, and were removed. It required all the self-command Mabella could muster to suppress her surprise, and especially when she saw Mrs. Mary very gravely take wine with the General, and bow to the vacant chair. She did, however, behave, as Mrs. Bonham said afterwards, with great discretion; and dinner being concluded, a conversation more lively and amusing than any she had ever heard, began.

Mrs. Faraday uttered sallies of wit and humour, that made her friends laugh right heartily, and cured Mabella of a suspicion, she had begun to entertain, that she was a little mad. Time passed rapidly, and, at last, to Mabella's great regret, Mrs. Mary ordered her carriage to be ready at half-past eight. Mrs. Faraday, however, was not willing to part with her new visitors; she pressed them to stay the night, and said, she would herself shew them the grounds, as soon

as the heat would permit. In the mean-time, she most obligingly exhibited to Mabella a beautiful collection of minerals, that belonged to Lady G——; she described each, with its properties and uses, and pointed out the infinite varieties of different combinations. She then shewed her the pictures most worth observation, and neither spared her encomiums, nor criticisms. Mabella thought her exceedingly entertaining; she explained, with a clearness that left her hearer in no doubt as to her meaning, and certainly with a sweetness of manner that irresistibly engaged the attention. If Mabella was pleased with her, she was not less so with her young auditor, whose unaffected modesty, and undivided attention, were very gratifying to her: she seemed anxious to amuse her; and, as soon as tea was over, she conducted her and the Mrs. Bonhams to the green-house, and through the grounds. Every sweet recess was explored, and

every lovely prospect pointed out! and as Mrs. Faraday expatiated on the beauties of the place, she could not help wondering that her relations would quit it, even for a season. This reflection introduced some conversation on the prevalence of emigration, the state of the country, and the probable consequences of the prevailing system! She made many sensible remarks, and talked of statesmen, and legislators, whose names poor Mabella had never heard mentioned. We, however, forbear to publish what she said, as we should grieve to bring any worthy character into trouble, on account of opinions highly meritorious and praiseworthy in themselves, and according well with the law of the land, and the maxims of the best and most illustrious characters; such might injure an individual in these times, when good sense is sedition, and truth treason.

During the whole of the evening Mabella did not hear a word of the Ge-

neral, and so much was she engaged, that she did not even think of him: but, when they again sat down to table, again there was the vacant chair, and the vacant plate, and the animated lady of the house again talked of taking wine with the General. Mabella could hardly believe her own ears; she could hardly imagine that Mrs. Faraday could be out of her senses.

After supper, that lady inquired, how or why it was that Miss Moleson was yet Miss Moleson, as she understood, that she was last August to have become Mrs. Felix Bonham; and Mrs. Mary answered her thus: "That whole affair, my dear Mrs. Faraday, has given us some concern, and as I know you enter deeply into the feelings of your friends, I will explain to you what I have never explained to those who are indifferent to me. When I wrote to you last July, we all expected that the obstacles formerly standing in the way of Cecilia's

marriage were removed: and Felix went to the Admiral, to make the last arrangements. During the first part of his absence he informed both us and Cecilia by letter, that his father expressed the greatest pleasûre in the arrangements, and that Mr. Moleson was expected over, soon, to conclude all! Cecilia left us, and went to pay her farewell visit at Brushwood Park; she staid but a short time, but the very morning of her arrival we received a letter from Felix, dated from an obscure inn in the West Riding, and informing us, that he had been, and was then very ill, partly from anxiety, partly from cold: that when his father and Mr. Moleson met to sign the writings, they quarrelled violently, Mr. Moleson being, as he said, unable to perform what he had agreed to, and his father catching at that, to retract all that he had promised. He said, his father had declared, that as Mr. Moleson had forfeited his word, and endeavoured to throw

the whole burden of providing for the young people upon him, he would never more give his consent to the marriage! He forbid his son to think of it, and expressed the utmost rage, when Felix told him, that, as a man of honour, he was bound to conclude it. At first, Felix was too much perplexed to be able to write; he set off to come down to us, but, being taken ill, he was compelled to write, as he did. He said, he did not doubt, but that when his father took time to cool, he might be brought to listen to reason; that, as he had written, he should forbear coming to York, but go to Town, and, perhaps, again join his father. He wrote to the same purport to Cecilia. You may guess our grief for both our amiable relatives, as they could not possibly marry, without a suitable provision. We broke it to Cecilia with all the caution in our power, and, to do the dear girl justice, she bore the disappointment, I had almost said with

unexampled fortitude. With a superstitious dread, natural enough, after so unexpected a delay, she said she knew it was not a match in heaven, and that it would never be one on earth! she was glad Felix had written, instead of coming down! it was less painful to her! perhaps he might change his mind, and see somebody he would prefer to her—such things were, naturally enough, the consequences of delays, and put-offs! she should not, however, play the mournful dove on the occasion, she should enjoy the pleasures of the race week, as she could not bear to let the world see she grieved." "Do you think she did grieve?" asked Mrs. Faraday. "I don't think, after such a disappointment, I could have found any pleasure in mixing with the throng of fools. What do you say, Miss Normanburn?"

"Oh, Madam! my only comfort would have been in these kind and indulgent aunts!" cried Mabella. The ladies

made no observation on what she said, but they shewed they approved it, by their kind looks. "Well!" continued Mrs. Mary, "however it might be, I know Cecilia ought to have grieved, for poor Felix was well nigh broken-hearted. We heard again from him from Grantham, where he was detained by illness, and he continued to write to his Cecilia, in every letter lamenting the delay, as having occasioned him the greatest misfortune of his life. As to Cecilia, she went through the race week at York, then accompanied the Brushwoods to Scarborough, then to Doncaster! then a tour to the Lakes, at so late a season, I wonder they did not all get their deaths of cold in their excursion! She passed the Christmas at the Park with them, went with them to Bath, and to London, and is now coming to us. We expect her down on Sunday with the family. In the meantime, Felix has tried, as we have all, to bring my brother to reason, and

he has, at last, promised to settle five hundred a year on Felix, in addition to what he possesses. Nay, I know, the papers are actually executed, and we intend that Cecilia shall be married with great privacy from our house. Felix is coming to us next week, and, if we can have our way, the parties will stay only long enough to make themselves parishioners." Mrs. Faraday thanked her friend for the trouble she had taken, and said, that it seemed as if the chief anxiety was on the side of the gentleman, where indeed, it ought to be! "I think Mr. Felix seems to have acted throughout with delicacy!" said she; "but I have heard a very fine character of him from several people, whose good opinion is worth having! He is said to unite the lion and the lamb in his composition! as well as the serpent and the dove. When abroad, he exposed himself through sheer generosity to great imminent danger, to save a poor persecuted foreigner;

and, it is said, his purse was always open to the needy of all nations. I don't know why, but, I fancy, it is from having heard so many fine traits of Felix Bonham! I always picture him to myself, as quite a preux chevalier! You must send him and his lady to visit me, my dear friends! Is he as handsome as his father was?"

"*We* think him uncommonly handsome!" answered Mrs. Sarah; "but we love him so entirely, that, perhaps, our partial opinion ought not to be received."

"He is, then, both good, generous, polished, and handsome!" said Mrs. Faraday, with a sigh! "so was once my General!" Sorry to have awakened so painful a feeling, the Mrs. Bonhams took leave for the night, and Mabella was attended to her room by Mrs. Faraday's own gentlewoman, whose costume was as antiquated as that of her mistress. She was very attentive, and obliging, and declared, that the servants were all very glad the ladies were come to see her

mistress! "My mistress, Miss, if she had been a man, might, they say, have been a minister of state, for she knows all the foreign tongues, and ways of going on!" said Mrs. Topping, "but it pleased the Lord she should be a woman. To be sure, she is a pattern for wives and widows, and has never admitted a carnal thought, since the General died. Indeed, how should she? for she spends all her time in reading, and trying tricks with experiments, I think she calls them, when she is at home! here she paints, and all that."

"Dear, she must be an uncommon lady!" exclaimed Mabella. "Yes, truly, Miss, she is! and sees things nobody else can, sometimes, I believe," answered Mrs. Topping. Mabella would have liked to know what she saw; but she felt the impropriety of questioning a lady's servant, and she soon after dismissed her.

CHAP. VIII.

In which Mabella makes two interesting Discoveries.

We could not deny our readers the pleasure of an introduction to Mrs. Faraday, who, when she took leave of her friends, gave both them and Mabella a pressing invitation to repeat their visit; and they half promised, that, as soon as Cecilia was married, they would do so; and that, if they did, they would try to bring Mabella with them. It is not, however, our intention to make our third volume a guide to Harrogate, by inserting a description of Studley, and Hackfall, and old ruins, and superb mansions in the neighbourhood! suffice, that the three following days were passed delightfully by Mabella, and that on the fourth they

visited S—— Hall, from whence they intended to return direct to Harrogate.

With all the inclination in the world to second Miss Normanburn's youthful ardour and activity, the Mrs. Bonhams did not, on that afternoon, find themselves at all equal to accompanying her on a second visit to a beautifully wooded eminence in the grounds, and, as she knew the way, having been there in the morning, and there was no other young person of the party, they told her, she had better go alone. The evening was sultry, and Mabella, with no covering but a muslin veil, walked slowly through an avenue to the foot of the hill, and then, as slowly ascended. She reached the summit, and had the pleasure to see an extensive and varied prospect, and the sun gradually declining. A rustic seat was erected there, so that she sat quite at her ease, and the whole scene bringing back to her mind that in Pike Wood,

she shed a shower of tears, and allowed herself, for a moment, to think of the stranger, as she had first thought of him. Then she reproached herself, and again wept; and thus, by turns indulging, and by turns reproaching, she remained on the spot, till the shades of evening fell. Having by this time worked herself into an agony of grief, she sobbed aloud, then starting up, exclaimed, "Why did I ever see him! or why cannot I forget him!" She then turned round to return, when the stranger, yes, the very individual stranger himself stood before her. "Miss Normanburn," said he—then, suddenly stopped; apparently, as much astonished, and affected, as herself. After a pause of some moments, during which, a gloom seemed to spread itself over his fine features, he said, in an almost inarticulate voice, "And are *you* Miss Normanburn? you? Oh! this is too cruel!"

By this time, Mabella had so far recovered herself, as to speak, and that with some composure.

"Where you learnt my name, Sir, I know not," said she; "but I see it gives you pain. I do not wonder at it. I have staid out sadly too late, my friends will be uneasy."

"They are very uneasy, Miss Normanburn," replied the stranger, in a firmer tone, "and they sent me to conduct you to the Hall!"

"Sent you? you? Why, who are you, Sir?" cried Mabella: "are not you the greatest enemy we have? is not your name Lightfoot?"

Mabella asked this question with a dread of hearing a reply in the affirmative—her pleasure, then, may be guessed, when the stranger answered, "No!"

"Tell me, then, Sir, who you are, pray tell me!" cried Mabella, feeling her heart lightened of a load of apprehension.

"My name is Bonham," said the stranger, "I am the nephew of your friends, the Mrs. Bonhams."

Poor Mabella had often hoped that the stranger might, by good luck, *not* be Lightfoot! and, at times, she had believed what she hoped! she little imagined that in discovering who he really was, she should feel a despair, to which her former apprehension was light indeed. He was now before her, the good, the generous, the polished, and handsome, affianced husband of Miss Moleson. Poor Mabella felt all this in a moment; she shivered; she leaned against the seat, and was silent. If she was absent, however, Mr. Bonham was not so; in a voice evidently intended to be cool, as politeness could make it, but almost faltering with emotion, he said, "Miss Normanburn, my aunts sent me in quest of you, fearing the dews of the evening might injure you! let me intreat you to return to the Hall! you shiver with cold! be-

lieve me, Madam, I am rejoiced to find that I owe my life to an individual of a family, so justly valued by mine." Mabella scarcely heard what he said, but, tying her veil over her head, so as to hide her face, she bowed, and began the descent. Mr. Bonham, taking a silk handkerchief from his pocket, begged her to tie it about her throat! she thanked him, and complied, and both proceeded in silence: he neither offered her his arm, nor expressed any apprehension from the slippery state of the dry grass walks, and, at last, Mabella noticing his silence, began to fear that he would interpret her's, but too truly; and, making an effort to feel and to act indifferently, she said, "The Mrs. Bonhams have been so very kind to me, the last week, that, I believe, I have been spoiled by indulgence! I have overtired myself through greediness to see all I could see! I am sorry, Sir, to have given you the trouble to come out to seek me!" To

this she received no answer; Mr. Felix only bowed. Again they walked on in silence, and again Mabella broke it, saying, "Oh! I've dropped the handkerchief!" still Mr. Bonham made no reply; he sighed, and picking up the handkerchief, put it once more round her throat. They were soon within sight of the Hall, and Mabella, hastening forward, made a hurried apology to the lady of the house, and Mrs. Bonhams, for her want of thought, and the trouble she had occasioned. "As to the trouble, my dear," said Mrs. Mary, "that is all my nephew's, and he is too gallant a man to quarrel with trouble in the service of the ladies! especially when I tell him, as I do now, that Miss Normanburn is a prodigious favourite with his aunts, and that they expect she will have her due share of family attention from him."

Felix smiled, in a languid manner, and then said, that he believed, con-

trary to his promise, he must decline the pleasure of staying all night; he was under the necessity of returning to Harrogate.

His aunts and his friends were all evidently disappointed; but he adhered to his declaration, and, in a quarter of an hour, he was gone. Mrs. Bonham told him to order their apartments for the following evening, as they should go to the village church with their friends at the Hall. The fears that he was not well, and the conjectures of what the business could be, that obliged him so suddenly to return to Harrogate, whence he had come in search of them, filled up the rest of the evening; and Mabella was never more happy to be released, than when the ladies ordered their candles: she dismissed the servant, who would have waited on her, and, fastening her door, threw herself on the bed, in a state of mind that was far from enviable. Recollecting, how-

ever, that the maid would come for her candle, as Mrs. Bonham had ordered, she unlocked the door, and hastened to bed; what she thought there, may be seen in the next chapter.

CHAP. IX.

Consciousness and Resolution.—A kind Aunt.

As it was evident to Miss Normanburn, that, before Mr. Bonham had seen her, he had proposed staying at the Hall; and that, after their interview, he had, to the great disappointment of all his friends, changed his determination; she could not avoid wondering, what there could have been in her behaviour, that could have had so decidedly unpleasant an effect on him! and conscious of that weakness, that she had, by the advice and with the approbation of her thoughtless aunt, cherished, during so many months, she imagined that he had divined the cause of her emotion, and that he, of course, despised her. Her mortification and her self-debasement were excessive, and the urgency of the occasion aiding a na-

turally upright heart, and fine understanding, (together with the utter impossibility of ever procuring a ray of hope for her preference) she set about considering, in what line of conduct the right path lay. After what she had heard from the Mrs. Bonhams, respecting their nephew's long attachment to Cecilia, his severe disappointment, last year, a disappointment he had called the greatest misfortune of his life, she could not imagine that he had regarded her, even with momentary admiration! and thus considering, that all she had to do, was to conquer her affection, and, till that could be done, to conceal it, she resolved to keep the strictest guard over her words, looks, and actions, neither to seek nor avoid his conversation, to think of him always as the husband of another, and to consider it a crime to cherish any sentiment towards him, but that of common good will. She felt that to do otherwise would be to wreck conscience

honour, and reputation! and all these were too dear to her, to be risked: a few hours of painful suffering, and self-reproach, had made Mabella many years older, and wiser in mind; she despised her former weakness; she felt, that she was intended for something better, than pining over a hopeless attachment, and she rose in her own estimation, in proportion as she strengthened her resolves. Luckily for Mabella, she had no confidante! she knew no young person, to whom she would have imparted either the past, or the present, and she had learnt from experience, that her aunt was not to be trusted. "It is buried for ever in that frail heart, where it sprung!" said she; and she soon after fell asleep, and enjoyed some refreshing repose.

In the morning, she heard, again and again, wondering and conjecturing, why Mr. Bonham had left them, and, at last, Mrs. Mary, laughing, said, "We are

all very stupid! why, you know, his fair Cecilia will be at the Park to-day, and I have no doubt in the world that Felix recollected this, after he had promised us! Oh, this love! I declare, he looked quite agitated, and distressed, last evening! I began to suspect, that my young friend here had been quarrelling with him!"

"It would have been difficult, Ma'am, to quarrel with a gentleman so politely silent," said Mabella, trying to bring into practice the good resolutions she had formed.

"Silent, was he?" said Mrs. Sarah: "well, that is unlike him! he is in general an amusing companion, and never at a loss! depend upon it, sister, it is as you say, and I shall not fail to rally him on being no wiser than the unwise are, in love affairs." This conversation was highly pleasing to Mabella, as it held out to her a hope, that his impatience to be gone, and not the discovery of her

weakness, had made him change his plan; and she accompanied her friends to the village church, with peculiar pleasure! she felt as if her good resolutions were strengthened, and, when the priest read, "Thou shalt not commit adultery," she prayed most earnestly, that she might not prefer the husband of another. Her mind was elevated, and comforted, and she returned to her aunt, in the evening, so cheerful, and so composed, that nobody would have guessed she had lately suffered any great emotion.

Mrs. Glassington did not look quite so happy as her niece, she was fretful, and, we might almost say, sulky; and for some time she uttered no word of welcome, or information to Mabella. At last, finding that Mabella proceeded quietly to the unpacking her clothes, and asked no questions, she burst forth:

"Indeed, Bell Normanburn, you behave very strangely! here, after you have been five days out amusing yourself, you

don't care to ask after your own relations, but go on unpacking your things, as if you had been with me all the time!"

"My dear aunt," said Mabella, "you said you were quite well, and I did not know you had had a letter from home!"

"You might have known, if you'd asked, Miss," returned the aunt: "there is your uncle's letter, and you'll see that they expect us to-morrow, or Tuesday, at the very farthest!" Mabella read her uncle's affectionate letter, and then said, with a smile, "I am very glad! very glad, indeed! do let us go to-morrow, aunt. I quite long to see my dear papa and uncle again! home is better than Harrogate."

"It is very well you think so, Bell!" said Mrs. Glassington: "but I should have thought that when Angelo Lightfoot was here, you might have had a little twitch about the heart to make you like to be here too! Then Captain Croker is come back, and has been doubly

attentive to me! He has been here but two days, and I must go on Tuesday!"

"We had better go to-morrow!" said Mabella. "*I* shall do no such things, Miss Bell!" said the aunt, "that I can promise you! and I must say, you are but an ungrateful brat to think of it, after all I've been doing for you with Lightfoot."

"Doing for me!" exclaimed Mabella, "good heavens! I hope you have not done any thing about him!"

"Come, come!" said the aunt, "that is too artful, Bell; when you know you would give your little finger to come at him! I'll tell you what I've done! and I expect something will come of it! The Chatterers are very intimate with him, and as they knew all about the wood scene, (you know, I told them before!) I thought I might as well eat humble pie to get into their good graces again; and it quite succeeded! we were soon as thick as mustard! so I gave them to understand, by a side wind, that Angelo was

in love with you, but did not know your name, and I begged Miss Jack to introduce me to him. There was a ball at the —— on Friday, to which I went with them and Mrs. Petman, who, I believe, is an ill-used woman! and there they kept their word, and introduced me; and I can tell you, girl, for your comfort, that he blushed crimson, when he heard my name, and then went altogether as pale. I had a long conversation with him, and, among other things, I asked him, if he remembered the thunder storm in Pike wood? and he said, he did perfectly. I then asked him if he had seen the same lady that inspired his verses on that occasion since? He looked very odd, and very confused, and then said a something in a foreign language, I did not understand, but I supposed, of course, it meant he had not; I did not like to seem ignorant of his words, so I said, "Well, Mr. Angelo! you may, by good luck, see her on Sunday next! that's the day!"

for you know I expected you last night. I can't tell you, Bell, how odd he looked! he blushed again, and then said, 'May I beg to know, where you learnt any thing of that lady? how do you know she will be down on Sunday?' but I only laughed, and said, I was behind the scenes. Well, that night I said no more, for I thought I would surprise him on Sunday, and though he joined us yesterday, I would not tell him any thing more, but that I knew the lady. We all enjoyed his perplexity, amazingly! and, to be sure, he must be the devil himself, for last night, when we were just coming in, he joined me and said, I should be disappointed, and not see the lady on Sunday, and not an hour after came Mrs. Stocking to say you would not be home till to-night."

Mabella had listened to the whole of this fearful relation in breathless terror; and, when her aunt had done, she said, "Thank heaven, aunt, you did not mention my name!"

"No, I did not," said Mrs. Glassington, "but I believe them mischievous Chatterers let the cat out of the poke!" Mabella heard no more; she uttered a groan, and flung herself almost fainting on the bed. Mrs. Glassington was exceedingly surprised and offended at this, and asked what was the matter; but Mabella was slow to answer, for she had determined never to tell her aunt, who the stranger was, and she was well aware, that to say he was not Lightfoot, would provoke that question: she lay then silent, and distressed, especially as, not having seen Lightfoot, she knew not how to say that she had been mistaken. When, however, she was a little recovered, she begged again that they might go to Purlbeck on the morrow, and the Chatterers might be requested not to mention the wood again, to neither of which her aunt would agree, as, she said, it was all childish folly, and she could not see any reason for it. "Suppose!" said Mabella, with as

steady a voice as she could command, "suppose, Mr. Lightfoot was *not* the man!" "And how can you suppose any thing so absurd? who should it be, but Lightfoot, Bell?" asked the aunt. "You say he is a *little* man!" said Mabella; "Yes! below middle size, and not so tall as you are now," answered Mrs. Glassington. "Then he certainly *is not* the man!" said Mabella, "he was taller by the head and shoulders than I am!"

"Impossible! you must be mistaken!" cried Mrs. Glassington: "why did not you say so before? did not you say, he was middle-size, and a little lame?"

"Oh no! it was Doctor Stunt, that said so," cried Mabella; "and I am very sure he was not lame! Oh no! he both walked, and ran so swiftly!"

"Did he? that's very odd! I don't think Angelo can run well!" said Mrs. Glassington, "but you may see him to-morrow!"

"I don't want to see him! I'm sure he is not the man! he is not tall," said

Mabella, and then she again begged her aunt to close her accounts in the morning, and after paying a farewell visit to Mrs. Bonhams, to quit Harrogate: this Mrs. Glassington would by no means consent to; she had resolved to stay till Tuesday, and to shew Mabella to Lightfoot, and she would not be disappointed. She was very angry with her niece for saying that, even if Mr. Lightfoot was the person, she would not on any account be introduced to him; she ridiculed her idea, that her papa and uncle would never forgive her! she called her mention of want of delicacy, and want of propriety, an insult to her, (Mrs. Glassington) as if it was likely she either could or would do any thing that was improper, or indelicate; and she concluded all, by calling her an ungrateful girl! no more fit to have a love affair on hand, than a very baby; then she said, she repented that she had meddled with her, and her love scenes; r if, after all, Angelo should not be the

fo

Angelo, it would be an awkward affair, and make a strange story in Harrogate, so that, take it which way you would, it had but a queer look. From Mabella, and Angelo, she digressed to Captain Croker, whom she affected to despise; but added, that he was well received by others, so why should he not by her? Then she began and recapitulated the disastrous circumstances that had rendered the first week of their arrival at Harrogate so inefficacious in the matrimonial line, and declared, that, just when matters might have been brought to a bearing, it was sheer ill-luck, and nothing else, to be sent back to Purlbeck, at such a moment! then she wept for vexation, and, at last, went to bed in a thorough ill-humour.

The greater part of this rhapsody Mabella did not listen to; she was too much occupied with her own fears, regrets, and mortifications! she saw that

her aunt had, she doubted not, with the best intention in the world, put her reputation into the power of the Chatterers; a family, as Mrs. Bonham had told her, famous in all its branches for saying the very opposite to the truth, and for malicious inventions! she dreaded the censure of the world! the censure of the Bonhams! the reproofs and reproaches of her father and uncle, for she did not doubt that they would hear of it someway or other, and she felt herself perfectly and degradingly wretched. The thought of going down to breakfast, in the morning, was wormwood to her, and she dreaded to see the Chatterers, who would, she doubted not, sneer at the poor love-sick girl; this idea determined her to be as composed as possible, and to trust to some favourable opportunity to undeceive them. As to Mr. Bonham, he was, she doubted not, gone to the Park to meet his Cecilia, and there was but little chance

of her meeting him the next morning at his aunts'; about him, then, she was easy, and even if he should be there, it would give her an opportunity of shewing him, that she could be composed in his presence. Perhaps, too, Miss Moleson might be with him; she hoped so, at least, as that would be an additional stimulus to her.

All this, and a great deal more, Miss Normanburn thought; but, as our readers have had a pretty large batch of thoughts and reflections, we will not enlarge further in this way.

Mabella dreaded the morning, but Time was not complaisant enough to prevent that fair lady from appearing at her usual hour; she arose in uncommon splendour, and was hailed in the customary way by birds, dogs, horses, cows, drivers, waiters, and housemaids, and Mabella was obliged to rise and to go down to breakfast. This she did, with a serenity of aspect, that pleased and surprised her

aunt; but having come to the end of our sixth book, we shall defer the relation of the adventures of the last day at Harrogate, till the commencement of our seventh.

END OF BOOK VI.

BOOK VII.

CHAP. I.

A last Day at Harrogate.—Two Breakfasts.

PERHAPS, that gay resort of old and young, sick and well, (Harrogate,) did not contain two beings more truly unhappy than Mrs. Glassington and her niece, nor any two whose thoughts were more at variance. They went down to breakfast with heavy hearts, and some traces of chagrin on their countenances, and took their places at their table, without looking round to see who was near them. Their ears, however, informed them that the whole party of the Chat-

terers was present, for Miss Chatterer, the elder, was telling some good story to her nieces, and two or three beaux, who were breakfasting with them, and she received the applause of her auditors in sundry exclamations of surprise and pleasure, and no small share of laughter.

Perhaps our readers will think that Miss Normanburn was not quite inexcusable, if she lent some attention to learn the subject of their mirth; for, apprehensive that they would make but too free with her name, she suspected that her wood-scenes were then actually under discussion. Nor was she mistaken! Mrs. Chatterer had been telling Snuffmore and Captain Gander, with another young man, what an extraordinary thing it was, that the possessor of Normanburn and the heiress of Normanburn should have been carrying on an intrigue, and meeting constantly in a wood, and not have agreed to make a match of it yet! Some people, she said, would have lost their

reputation from such green-shade meetings, especially when they were forced to come to Harrogate to recover strength after confinements! what about, she knew not! fevers were convenient things! and to this point, with the addition of sundry witticisms, in which the gentlemen joined, she had arrived, when Mabella entered the room. The laughter was increased by her arrival; and by hearing her own name and Lightfoot's half whispered between whiles, she soon ascertained the truth. Luckily for her, she sat with her back to them, so that the tears of mortification this produced were not visible to her tormentors, and as there was a good deal of bustle in the room, she might be supposed not to hear them.

Captain Croker entered soon after Mrs. Glassington, and before he sat down to his own table, he came up to pay his compliments to Miss Normanburn. Mabella bowed without speaking to his welcome, and, indeed, without raising her

eyes, for they were filled with tears, and apprehensive mortification. The Captain, on the contrary, was all joy and hilarity, and two or three lively sallies passed between him and the aunt, which gave the niece time to recover herself. Mrs. Glassington asked him to transfer his tea-pot to her table, and give them the pleasure of his conversation, this last morning at Harrogate. "I assure you, we are both quite out of sorts at the thoughts of leaving so much good company," said she, "but women, whether married or single, must obey, and we are called home, *will I nill I.*" Mr. Croker's reply to this was a regret that he should so soon be deprived of the pleasure he had promised himself in returning to Harrogate! a compliment Mrs. Glassington appropriated to herself, though the speaker's eyes directed it to her depressed companion.

During the whole breakfast, Mabella said nothing, a defect amply supplied by

her aunt, who talked so incessantly, that if Mr. Croker had had any of those matrimonial aspirations, she ascribed to him, he would, during that breakfast, have been entirely cured of them.

At length, the company began to move, and the Chatterers came to welcome Mabella back to Harrogate. The old Chatterer said, she looked as if she had been wandering in mournful groves, and listening to doves, while the younger ones assured her, that she had lost the very pleasantest week, both as to weather, company, and amusements, that there had yet been at Harrogate. By this time Mabella, by a great effort, had suppressed her indignation and her tears, and she answered, "I am glad you found it so pleasant! but, for my own part, I have seen such beautiful places, and been so happy with the good and kind Mrs. Bonhams, that I do not regret leaving Harrogate."

"Perhaps, child, you don't know all

the attractions we have here *now!*" cried Mrs. Chatterer, opening her eyes still wider, while Snuffmore put up his glass to see how Mabella bore the roasting, and Gander lengthened his neck, and grinned with his mouth wide open; "we have a certain young beau here! he would have been a pretty addition to your country wood scenes!"

"As I do not know any beau at Harrogate, I cannot pretend to guess who you mean, Ma'am!" said Mabella, with an air of great contempt; "but a beau may be a disagreeable addition sometimes, however *pretty* he is!" "Lord G—d of Heaven! only hear how witty she is!" cried Mrs. Jack Chatterer; "I can answer for it, child, that you would not have found Mr. Lightfoot a *disagreeable* addition."

"I do not know Mr. Lightfoot, Madam! and therefore cannot judge whether I should or not!" said Mabella, firmly. "Not know him!" cried all the party at once. "No, ladies, I never to my

knowledge even saw Mr. Lightfoot!" answered Mabella, haughtily; "and, considering him, as I do, the greatest enemy of my family, I hope I never shall see him! It is an insult to the Normanburns, to suppose we could wish to know those people, who were made the instruments of our oppression." There is something in truth that will enforce itself on the minds of those who listen to it, and Miss Normanburn, who was exceedingly moved by the imminent peril in which she saw her reputation to be, spoke in a raised voice, and an emphatic manner, that attracted the attention of all present, and carried conviction to the hearts of every one, except the Chatterers, and Mrs. Petman: they had been told by Mrs. Glassington, and they only felt astonished that Mabella, who generally appeared so mild and gentle, should tell an untruth with as much spirit and firmness, as they themselves could have done. After a pause, they exclaimed, "Well,

Miss Normanburn, you act it well, but your aunt knows better!" and Mrs. Glassington making a sign to them to be quiet, said, she would explain all by and by. She was told in reply, that it was plain enough, it needed no explanation, and the party were moving off, when Mabella begged them to stay a moment. "Ladies," said she, "my aunt has nothing to explain, that may not as well be explained now. When I was quite a child, I saw a person asleep in a wood, where I was in the habit of walking, and a snake was creeping towards him; I made a noise, and awoke that person, a man very plainly dressed, and a stranger to me. He repaid the kindness I had shewn him by thanks, and I left him on the spot. My aunt was led to imagine, from the wood being a part of the Normanburn estate, that it was my greatest enemy, whose life I had saved, but it was not! and I repeat again, that unless Mr. Lightfoot is a very tall man, it cannot have been he."

"Who was it then?" cried two or three at once; a question to which Mrs. Glassington replied, luckily for Mabella, who could hardly have articulated, she did not know! the only prudent reply. Mrs. Glassington said, that neither she nor her niece had ever seen him, so they could not tell, and all they were certain of was, that it was not Mr. Angelo. "At first," said the wise lady, "I thought it must have been him! but now I know it is not! and I have lost my joke about saving the life of a man, one is bound to hate! Bell, there, is very angry at me for telling any thing about her wood adventure; but I think it tells to her credit, poor child! I'm sure, instead of calling out, I should have run away, and left the man to be devoured! yet it makes a pretty romance enough! But come, we'll say no more about it; for I've teased Bell about saving lives, till she is quite angry with me."

Many people, among whom was Croker,

would have asked several questions, but Mabella declined conversation, and retired to her room, where her aunt soon joined her. After some time passed in unavailing regret that the subject had ever been mentioned, they put on their bonnets, and went to the R—— to call on the Bonhams.

Here our poor heroine assured herself she might pass an hour happily, and without the intrusion of any body, who would recal one unpleasant or agitating thought, and they were shewn into Mrs. Bonham's private sitting-room, being told by the servant who conducted them to the door, that his ladies would be down stairs in a minute. They found the breakfast things on the table, and Mabella observed, that she feared from her friends being so late, they had taken cold on their excursion. She had hardly made the observation, when the door opened, and in walked Mr. Bonham in boots, and evidently after riding. Mabella felt her blood retreat to

her heart, but she endeavoured to practise what she knew to be right; she appeared as composed as possible, and making an effort to speak without faltering, she introduced her aunt to Mr. Bonham. His manner to Mabella was that of the most distant politeness, and, sitting down by Mrs. Glassington on the sofa, he said he was sorry to see his aunts were so late, as he feared one or both were indisposed. "For my own part," continued he, addressing Mrs. Glassington, "I have been earning an appetite! I rode over this morning to the Park, to leave some letters for the ladies who are expected, and I fear my worthy aunts have waited for me."

"Very likely, Sir!" said the widow, eyeing his fine face and person with great delight!" they are, I'm sure, the very kindest friends in the world! they have behaved to Mabella, there, more like her aunts, or even mothers, than any thing else!"

"What did you call Miss Normanburn, Madam?" said Felix, blushing.

"I gave her her whole name, Mabella, Sir!" answered Mrs. Glassington: but generally we call her Bell, and sometimes my brother, the Captain, calls her little Mabel, and sometimes plain Mab." Mr. Bonham bowed, and rising hastily, rung the bell, and ordered the water for breakfast: observing that it would be better to make the tea for his aunts.

Mabella, who had sat all this time silent and quiet, now begged she might have the pleasure of making the tea for Mrs. Bonhams, and Felix, placing a chair for her, resigned the caddie. And now Mrs. Glassington, who was burning with curiosity to know all about the Park family, and particularly Miss Moleson, said, archly, she supposed from their finding Mr. Bonham at Harrogate, that the ladies had not yet arrived at the Park.

"You are quite right, Madam!" said he, blushing, "they were expected certainly

yesterday, but when I came here on Saturday evening, I found a note from the housekeeper to say, that they should sleep on the road, and be at the Park to breakfast; their hours, however, are very late, and I came to propose to my aunts to ride over and meet Cecilia. You have seen my cousin, I think, Mrs. Glassington?" "Yes, Sir, I saw her last August," said the lady. Mr. Bonham walked to the window, and Mrs. Glassington again looking very significantly, said, she hoped soon to hear of her under another name besides that of Moleson. What answer Mr. Bonham might have returned to this, we know not, for he was prevented by the entrance of his aunts, who welcomed Mabella with a kiss, and said, they were happy to see her looking so blooming. They insisted on the ladies not stirring a step, as they could not part from them, and then inquired, why Felix was such a truant to his lady mistress, as to be again at Harrogate?

In a few words he related why he had come, and begged that his aunts would go with him to fetch Cecilia, instead of waiting for her to be brought to them. They seemed to hesitate to reply, but, at last, Mrs. Mary said, "you are certain, Felix, that we would refuse you nothing that we could consistently grant. But you know very well, that we have a particular objection to going to Brushwood, and as these ladies are aware of it, I have the less scruple in explaining myself. We know, for we have undoubted information, both from Cecilia herself, and other people, that Mr. Angelo is in almost constant attendance there; the world says, he woos the Lady Pleasance, how that is, I know not; but this I know, that I consider both his father and himself as no better than robbers, and never will we, either of us, subject ourselves willingly to associate with them, even for a day. Mr. Angelo went to Normanburn after we returned here last night; doubtless,

he is now at the Park. Excuse us, then; go and fetch Cecilia; take our carriage, if you please, and we will walk, as soon as the heat will allow us, with our friends here. Mr. Bonham made no reply to this, but by refusing to take the carriage, saying, that Lady Brushwood would doubtless bring over Miss Moleson: he, however, looked somewhat chagrined, and changed the subject by asking Miss Normanburn if she had enjoyed her excursion? To this Mabella replied shortly, and pleasingly, when a new arrival made an addition to the party.

CHAP. II.

A last Day at Harrogate.—More Company.

To the great surprise of the party assembled at the R- the servant announced Mrs. Faraday, who, after paying her compliments to the Mrs. Bonhams, kindly saluted Mabella. She was introduced to Mr. Bonham and Mrs. Glassington: to the former she said, " Sir, I should have known you from your great resemblance to all the Bonhams I have had the happiness to know. Pray, is Miss Moleson as handsome as her mother? you will be an uncommonly fine couple; I wish I could persuade you to sit to me: I am painting, or rather, I am intending to paint, the summer-house scene from Julius Fitz-John, and, I think, Lady Mary and Mr. Manton could not be better personified! however, that is

out of the question; but I am in great hopes my young friend here will not refuse to be my model for Lady Mary: to own the truth, the General rode over with me, in part, to ask this favour." Mabella answered, that if she had been remaining at Harrogate, she should have great pleasure in obliging her, but that she was to return next morning.

Mrs. Faraday looked disappointed, but said, she did not despair of her yet, if Mrs. Bonham would intercede with her friends to spare her for a few weeks to her at the hall.

"Madam," said Mabella, "it must then, if you please, be some time hence; at present, I have been a whole month from my dear papa and uncle, and I could not, on any account, stay longer."

"You are a sweet girl! and so every body must say, that has either eyes or ears!" said Mrs. Faraday: "it is lucky for Mr. Bonham, that his heart is already the prize of Miss Moleson! as the General

would say! Now I know I am impertinent, and an odd sort of a body, Mr. Bonham! but, do tell me, when you mean to marry! I shall have a great pleasure in keeping the day as a festival, from my great love to the family! The General, too, thinks as I do."

"Madam," said Felix gravely, "if I knew the day, I would without any hesitation impart it to you, and I shall feel obliged by your kind observance of it, but I do not! it is the privilege of the lady to fix the day, and if Cecilia had complied with my wishes she would now have been mine! but she and my aunts are particular *where* we are married! I confess, the *when* appears to me more important. Every day's delay is—an additional *pang* to me!"

"Good God! my dear Nephew! how earnestly, and how pathetically you speak about it!" said Mrs. Sarah, "I'm sure, we should have been glad that you should have married in town, and we even think,

after what passed last year, it would have been best!"

"It would! much the best, Madam!" said Mr. Bonham! "it would have saved me—all I now feel! I do not quite understand by what fatality it was not so arranged." "Sir," cried Mrs. Glassington, "I see you think as I do about love and matrimony, you think it all goes by fate! I must say, myself, that I always think your puts off bad signs, and who can say, whether yet, near as matters are come to the point, some spoke may not be stuck in the wheel! Aye, aye! that's always the way with true love! always some misfortune or other!" The whole party looked somewhat surprised at this speech; the Mrs. Bonhams would have smiled, but they saw Mabella was not insensible to the ridiculous part of it, and Mrs. Faraday uttered an exclamation that surprised Mr. Bonham: then, as if suddenly recollecting herself, she said, she had kept the General so long waiting, that she must be

excused, if she concluded her visit. The company rose, and Mrs. Faraday, after taking a ceremonious leave of each, was led to her carriage by Felix, who immediately returned.

In order to save their nephew any fresh attack from Mrs. Glassington, the Mrs. Bonhams made a few observations on the malady that rendered Mrs. Faraday so singular. "It is a curious thing," said Mrs. Mary, "but, I believe, except on the subject of her husband, Mrs. Faraday is as much in her senses, as any of us. I fancy, poor thing, that there was a touch of madness in the family! however, it never shewed itself till the General's death, when she took it into her head, that he still lived for her, and she will sometimes relate the conversations she has held with him! in other respects, she is a superior woman, and I shall be glad, my dear Miss Normanburn, to go there with you, when we have more time upon our hands."

As it now grew late in the day, Mrs. Glassington would have taken leave; but Mrs. Bonham said, she had a favour to ask, and she could not part with her so soon: Mr. Bonham ordered his horse to ride over to Brushwood, and it was already at the door, when the equipage of Lord Brushwood arrived, and Miss Moleson and Lady Brushwood, with Lord Billy Sniddy, and another gentleman, entered the room.

"Bonham, I am very angry with you!" cried her ladyship, without taking notice of any body else in the room; "I would fain have persuaded Miss Moleson not to come, as you had not the politesse to wait at the Park for her! I declare it is abominable! you treat her with as little ceremony, as if you had been married a week! My Lord, himself, could not shew more sang froid!"

"My Lady, I treat Miss Moleson, as I intend to treat Mrs. Bonham," said Felix with an air of resentment; "and, if she

had so far neglected her duty to her aunts and to me, as to forbear this visit, because I was not in waiting to conduct her, I should have been exceedingly displeased! My dear Cecilia; I am rejoiced to see you! I thank you for hastening to me!"

"I won't take the merit of hastening to you, Felix," said Miss Moleson gravely, "I came really to see my aunts, and I never once inquired whether you were here or not. My dear aunts, give me leave to introduce Mr. Angelo Lightfoot to you!" The two good sisters started at this address, while Lightfoot made his bow, and then going up to Mrs. Glassington, he asked her, how she did, in the most familiar manner, and staring at Mabella, half whispered, "Is this my Dryad?" No answer being given, a fearful pause ensued, during which, Lady Brushwood and Lord Billy examined Mabella through their glasses, Cecilia threw herself upon the sofa, the two sisters looked on each other, as not knowing

what to say, Mrs. Glassington and Mabella were ready to weep, Lightfoot surveyed a picture that hung in the room, and Felix walked up and down in the greatest agitation. This did not continue long, he stopped opposite Miss Moleson, and said, "I think, Cecilia, you must have been aware that my aunts could not be gratified by the introduction of Mr. Lightfoot, and especially now, when Miss Normanburn is present. You see the consternation you have caused! I am sorry both on their account and Mr. Lightfoot's! Had he known their wish not to be introduced to him, or have him introduced to them, I am certain he is too well-bred to have suffered even Lady Brushwood to have brought him! Cecilia, this is not right!"

Before Miss Moleson could reply, Lightfoot addressed Felix: "I must beg, Mr. Bonham, that Miss Moleson's earnest desire to oblige me in this introduction, may not draw down upon her your dis-

pleasure! I swear, I am an utter stranger to any thing, on my part, that can possibly have caused such a horrid horrification, as I see those good gentlewomen suffering under! Sir, I withdraw! My Lady, I shall be happy in the honour! My Lord Billy, are you for remaining, or will you promenade?"

"I'll promenade!" said Lord Billy: and the two gentlemen left the room. "Well, upon my soul, Bonham! this is downright savage in you!" cried my Lady. "I never saw so complete an insult, both to Lightfoot and Cecilia, in my life! Upon my word, Mrs. Bonham, you have tutored this young man finely! we'll have him sent in a cage to Exeter Change! the Rhinoceros is nothing to him. Nay, Miss Moleson, my dear, don't cry! Lord bless me! I wish we had never come!"

"I must wish Mr. Lightfoot had not come, Madam!" said Mrs. Bonham; "his presence has given me the more pain, as

my niece knew, in doing what she has done, she was acting in direct opposition to our wishes! it is, however, past, and I hope, Felix, you will forgive it, as we do."

"Forgive! forgive it?" cried Miss Moleson, "he needs *my* forgiveness, I think! never was any young woman, situated as I am, treated with such cruelty! what may I expect when I am married?"

"Oh, the same, my dear! at least, so he said! did not you, Mr. Bonham? *I treat Miss Moleson, as I intend to treat Mrs. Bonham!* was not it so, Mr. Bonham?" cried Lady Brushwood. Mr. Bonham looked, first at her ladyship, and then at Cecilia, as if uncertain which he should address; but, at last, turning to the Peeress, he said, "If your intention, Lady Brushwood, is to *get up*, as you would call it, a quarrel between Cecilia and myself, I flatter myself you will be mistaken! though misled by you in this instance, my cousin is too right-minded, too gentle, and too rational, not to per-

ceive and acknowledge her error! I return you thanks in her name and in my own for the protection you have afforded her in her single state, and I feel particularly obliged by your bringing her this morning! she will of course, remain with my aunts, who came up on purpose to receive her."

"Oh! as to that, she will of course, do exactly as she pleases!" returned Lady Brushwood, with a sneering laugh, "She has promised me for the next two months! but I hate any thing on compulsion! she shall do as she pleases! I hate constraining people to any thing! but we shall have the Park full! the Lord knows who! a certain great personage has half promised, and we shall muster in great force! you'll come, of course, you know! and, if you like to be married from the Park, why it will be a fête the more, and we shall be the more obliged to you!" Before Bonham could answer, Mrs. Glassington and Mabella, along with Mrs.

Sarah, quitted the room! they adjourned to a sleeping room to await the issue of a conversation, which exceedingly agitated Mrs. Sarah, and she expressed so much alarm, and mortification, that Mrs. Glassington and Mabella could not leave her.

The conversation, however, did not flag in the dining room, for Mr. Bonham was truly hurt, on his aunt's account, and he spoke thus to Cecilia:

"You know, my dear Cecilia, that before you could possibly make the promise to Lady Brushwood, we had both promised my aunts to be with them, immediately on your arrival in Yorkshire. No temptation will, because no temptation ought to make you break this promise; and I shall have, indeed, but a slender chance for happiness, if your love for me alone would not induce you to remain, where I shall remain! Far be it from me, and, I'm sure, from my aunts, to lay any restraint on you! *we* hate compulsion, as much as her Lady-

ship! and, for my part, I declare, that perfect love, and a desire to oblige, are the only motives I would give a rush for!" Miss Moleson had, by this time, pretty well recovered herself, and she was somewhat softened by the emphatic manner, and exquisitely moving voice of her lover; she held out her hand to him, and with a sweet smile, she said: "Come now, Felix! I am sorry to see that both you and my aunts are angry with me! My dear aunt Mary, there, looks as much concerned as if I had run away to Gretna Green with her Ladyship's gentleman, and then brought him here, as I did poor Angelo!"

"I really am concerned!" said Mrs. Mary, gravely; "and I must say, Cecilia, that, altogether, there is a want of delicacy about your conduct this morning, that hurts me! nay, a want of feeling! My dear Cecilia, what is the matter? you must know you are wrong!"

"There!" cried Lady Brushwood,

"a pretty lecture you'll have, my dear! as bad as one of the Bishop of ——'s sermons! Well, Mrs. Mary, your sister is gone; shall we join her in a promenade, and leave these good people to settle their little démêlée?"

Mrs. Mary, who, perhaps, thought the motion was not a bad one, rose to attend her Ladyship, when Miss Moleson opposed her, and would not allow her to go out: "My dear aunt," said she to Mrs. Mary, "you see Felix yet looks grim at me, and I want you to make peace between us: I know you are goodness itself, and will intercede for me."

"Cecilia can want no intercession with me," said Felix; "she is herself an host."

"Are you quite in earnest?" said her Ladyship; "because, if you are, we may as well conclude matters at once; you will let Cecilia come to us? I know you will! and my dear Mrs. Bonhams will grant me the pleasure they meant to mo-

nopolize! they will give me Cecilia till after the races."

"We neither can nor will compel, Madam!" said Mrs. Mary; "we came here to take my niece to York; if she prefers returning with your Ladyship, we shall not complain."

"Well, now, that is very kind, indeed," said Miss Moleson; "you see, Felix, my aunt agrees, like a dear, kind aunt as she is! what do *you* say?"

Mr. Bonham looked earnestly at Miss Moleson, and then said:

"I have no right to controul you, Madam! you will do what is most agreeable to you! I have only to tell you, that you must excuse me, if I do not once wait upon you, while at the Park."

"A pretty menace!" cried Cecilia: "if you are able to keep your word, Felix, I may begin to imagine I have lost my hold on your heart."

"My dear Cecilia," said Bonham, earnestly, "let me entreat you to consi-

der! why not return to York to-morrow, and be married, as soon as our residence shall enable us to be so? We shall still have time enough to join Lady Brushwood before the Races."

Cecilia started, and averted her face; she seemed to Felix to be considering how she might comply, and he renewed his solicitations: when her Ladyship rose to ring for her carriage, saying, "Well, my pretty turtles! I see I am to be forsaken, and I have half a hundred people to call upon. My good Mrs. Mary, pray say the agreeable for me to Mrs. Sarah. I frightened her away! and you, Cecilia, send me a piece of cake for pity's sake! I'll make the girls of our party, and perhaps the —— himself, dream upon it. Embrace me, my sweet Cecilia!"

The two ladies then flew into each other's arms, and the elder whispered the younger, "Come with me, or you'll be tied for ever."

When the embrace was ended, and it was some time first, Miss Moleson said, with one of her best smiles, "Now, Felix, don't be angry, but I must go back to the Park! I know my aunt will excuse me, and I wish you would come! we have a sweet party!"

"You know my determination, Miss Moleson," said Mr. Bonham, "and you know my *wishes*: if you prefer the society of others to mine, I leave you at full liberty to enjoy it."

Probably Cecilia would have staid with her aunt and her lover, after this, if her Ladyship had not seized her arm, and calling out something about child's play, hurried her down to the carriage.

Mr. Bonham followed them; and, as he handed Cecilia in, he said, in French, "When, Miss Moleson, am I to expect the honour of being your husband?"

"Come over to the Park, and we will

settle that," answered his cousin: he dropped her hand, made a slight bow, and returned to his aunt, who was exceedingly hurt by the transactions of the morning.

CHAP. III.

A last Day at Harrogate.—Self-accusation.—Letters.

Mr. Bonham was too much irritated, and too much hurt to be able to converse; he threw himself on the sofa, his colour heightened, and his breath short! he sat for a moment, then started up and paced the room. Mrs. Mary was herself so very angry, that she would not trust herself to speak; she left him, and went up stairs to her sister. "Well, my dear, Cecilia is gone! actually gone!" cried she, "and with as little remorse, as if she did not know that she had left her three best friends behind her! As to Felix, he is deeply displeased, and, much as he loves her, I believe he cannot yet forgive her! my dear Mrs. Glassington, this will make a change in our plans, and as we have

not our niece to take to York, we will, if you please, have the pleasure of conveying you and Miss Normanburn home. Do I speak your thoughts, sister?"

"I shall be most happy," answered Mrs. Sarah; "and as I like to make all things plain and easy, let us now agree upon what terms we will make a visit to Purlbeck! We know very well that Purlbeck is not quite so large as Brushwood Park, and that, in proposing to make a visit there, we are in fact proposing to turn its inhabitants out of their rooms! this we do not intend, and the favour we had to ask of you, Madam, was to find us an abode in the village, to which our own carriage can every evening carry us from, and every morning bring us to you. Had my niece kept her word with us, one of us only would have accompanied you; but, as it is, we can both go! a country village will be very pleasant to us at this season."

This proposal filled those it was made to with joy; Mrs. Glassington was proud to be carried home in a real carriage, as she called it, and Mabella was delighted to preserve the company of her new friends, a little longer, than she had hoped! besides, it would be such a treat to her papa, and her uncle! She and her aunt expressed themselves so happy in the arrangement, that the good ladies were satisfied they should give pleasure, and they took leave of each other for the day, after fixing the hour in the morning, at which they would set out.

As soon as Mrs. Glassington and her niece were gone, the two aunts went down to Mr. Bonham, and without making any comment on Cecilia's conduct, for they were careful not to widen the breach, they told him what their own plan was, and added, that they supposed he, of course, would either remain at Harrogate, or go to the Park; when he had determined, they begged to hear from him.

"For the present I shall certainly stay a few days at Harrogate!" said he, "but what it will be proper to do afterwards, I have yet to consider. Cecilia has this morning shewn a want of feeling, and even of gratitude to you, that is diametrically opposite to that extreme sensibility she once displayed! I do not understand it! perhaps, I was harsh, and severe in my manner! I did not mean to be so! I could not mean it! but, after all I have suffered, to secure her happiness, the exceeding want of attention to what she knew would contribute to mine,—has struck a damp to my heart. Then, it is not only the thing itself, but the manner of doing it! I never did like Lady Brushwood, and I fear she is too fond of mischief to leave Cecilia to the dictates of her own mind! I wish I had a clue to guide me through this labyrinth of doubts."

"Have a little patience, Felix," said Mrs. Mary. "I doubt not that Cecilia

will repent! at any rate, you are assured of her affection! that has stood a long trial; and it is rather the whim of the moment, than any diminution of love, that has occasioned all this. I suspect that they have some play or opera getting up for this distinguished personage, and they want Cecilia, who is certainly a most enchanting songstress! my Lady thought, naturally enough, that she could not well appear immediately after her marriage; and, besides, she rather dislikes us, and loves a little mischief! I think you had better ride over, and see Cecilia alone! if she changes her mind, we can at any time meet her on two or three days notice! Besides, we are within your reach when at Purlbeck, and the Normanburns will be glad to see you, I dare say."

"No, no!" answered Felix, hastily, "you must not expect me! I ought not for my own sake to go to the Park; after what I have said! but I will write to Ce-

cilia, and send the letter by your man to-night; you will then hear what her answer is."

"Do so! our journey may yet be altered from two to one!" said Mrs. Bonham, and, placing her writing-desk before her nephew, she left him to compose his letter. When Felix was alone, however, he did not find it so easy to compose either his letter or himself; he viewed the transactions of the morning in different lights, and his conscience reproached him with an ill-suppressed preference for Mabella; he feared he had been less than just to Cecilia. The reader is acquainted with his motions after he left her in the wood, with the illness he had, and his subsequent efforts to bring his father to reason; but he knows not the struggles between honour and inclination; the efforts to suppress his wish to break off the affair altogether, when he had so fair an opportunity furnished by the avarice of the two fathers; the doubt (he called it

conscientious doubt) whether it was just to Cecilia to marry her, while he would have preferred another! These the reader knows not, and happily may never experience! they embittered the life of Mr. Bonham, and he almost wished that Mabella had not preserved him for such a struggle. Mr. Bonham, however, had an honourable mind! he would have died rather than have committed one base action: Cecilia had loved him for a length of time, and, till he saw Mabella, he thought he loved her! She had not changed! she was still the same elegant, kind, and affectionate being, as when she promised him her hand; and, as he might never see his wood-nymph again, as he determined not to love her, and as Cecilia would never know his mental infidelity, he decided, 'that whatever became of his own happiness, he was yet bound to secure her's. He remained, then, faithful to his engagements; but, as his negociations with his father had

afforded him few opportunities of seeing her, their connexion was continued by letter; and, anxious to have the sacrifice concluded, he came down into Yorkshire with the full determination to marry, as early as possible. He pressed Cecilia to marry in London, but she would not hear of it; and, as he doated on his aunts, he was not displeased with the wish she expressed to be married from their house.

When he had followed his aunts to S— Hall, he listened to their encomiums on the sweet heiress of Normanburn, without the slightest idea, that Miss Normanburn was his preserver! but the sight of her told him that she had too strong an interest in his heart, and he fled. On the present occasion, he could not help fearing that he had been rendered too irritable, and too severe by his mental sufferings; and he accused himself of speaking to Cecilia, rather like an unkind brother, than a tender lover. It was then his *duty*, he thought, and he laid a great

stress on the word *duty*, to make Cecilia amends; and after about an hour and a half spent in vain reflections, and self-reproaches, he completed the following letter, which was carried to the Park by Pulling, the coachman, and to which he received an answer, as may be seen below.

To Miss Moleson.

"My dear Cecilia,

"The presence of Lady Brushwood prevented me, this morning, from urging more strongly my reasons for wishing your stay; and I am much mistaken, if it was not chiefly instrumental in preventing you from listening to those I did advance. I spoke of my aunts' wishes, my dear Cecilia, with more earnestness than I could of my own! and surely we both owe those excellent women so much, that we should be willing to sacrifice any pleasure of our own to gratify them. But I wave this subject to speak on one I have

more at heart. You have flattered me, Cecilia, that I had your heart, and you have promised me your hand! Let me conjure you, my all but wife! not to delay the completion of our nuptials a day longer than is necessary! pardon any expression my impatience on this subject might cause me to use! I am more anxious about it, than you can imagine! and I freely confess, that the longer it is delayed, the more serious my uneasiness becomes. Would it could be to-morrow! let me come over to you, and fix our plans! I will not see the family, I will visit you alone! Our good aunts go to Purlbeck to-morrow; but, if you will agree to go to York, one of them will remain to accompany us. I fear, Cecilia, that my letter is incoherent! how can it be otherwise with a heart torn as mine is?

"Ever your affectionate,

"Felix Bonham."

Miss Moleson to Felix Bonham, Esq.

"My dear Felix,

"Really your letter has quite frightened me, for you talk of uneasiness, and your heart being torn, as if you suspected I should change my mind, and fall in love with somebody else. I own I did think you unkind this morning, and so did Lady B. and when I told Miss Trehern, who is just arrived, she said it was enough to freeze the current of her blood. I am sorry you are so anxious about the day, but the truth is, it must, I believe, be the beginning of the week after the races, for my Angelina is to be my bride maid, and I have promised to go with this family to the races, and Angelina won't stir, till then. Do come over to us to-morrow, and make up your mind to stay with us! If you really feel all the love and anxiety you say, you won't mind the little roasting and quizzing my Lady will treat you with. My love to

my aunts—I don't intend to offend, or to hurt them! but one is not always at one's own disposal.

"Ever your affectionate,

"CECILIA MOLESON."

"D—n Angelina! a sickening plague! she taints Cecilia's mind with her morbid sensibility! if I could hate any woman, who had never injured me, it would be Miss Trehern! I'm sure, she is not pure in mind, whatever she may be in person. Would Cecilia was out of her power! the influence she exerts over Cecilia is surprising! mine sinks in comparison! indeed, I appear at present to have none!" Such were Mr. Bonham's thoughts, when he read Miss Moleson's letter; and he could not help ascribing Cecilia's refusal to name an early day, to Miss Trehern's advice; though what motive she could have to give such advice, he could not divine. Then there was an air of flippancy in Miss Moleson's letter, that ill

suited the circumstances she was placed in! altogether, Mr. Bonham was disgusted, and displeased, and his state of mind was but little favourable to Miss Moleson, who, for the first time, appeared insensible, nay, even unkind, and certainly flippant. Conscious, however, of his own weakness, he could not help questioning himself, whether Miss Moleson might not have discovered something in his manner or behaviour, that might make her think it prudent to delay concluding their engagement, till she should receive warmer proofs of his attachment; and he imagined that though he was not aware of it, this might be the case. "It is but just, then, in her to try me, and it will be but just to satisfy her! However painful to me, I will do so!" said he, "I will go to the Park; and be as insensible, as I can, to all but Cecilia! Would she was already my wife! I could not then, even think it possible to retract!"

In pursuance of his determination, that

it was right, and but just to Cecilia to go to the Park, Mr. Bonham acquainted his aunts, that, the next morning, as soon as he had seen them off, he should ride over to the Park. "Well, Felix! so I expected!" said aunt Mary, "I thought you were too much in love to be consistent! However, I hate quarrels, so I shall be glad that this will be made up, and that whether you marry before or after the Races, the intermediate time may be passed in peace and happiness. Tell our dear girl, Felix, that she should remember the days of Hilpa are past and gone, and that her beauty will hardly be as durable as Helen's. You will stay at the Park, of course, and I desire you will bring Cecilia over to Purlbeck to see us! I should wish her, and you, both, to like our beautiful little queen Mab! who wants friends to introduce her properly, and Cecilia will, I know, to oblige us, be kind to her." Mrs. Bonham spoke without any interruption, for her nephew was startled

at her proposal! he felt that Mabella ought never to be his guest, never to be his companion! and his countenance betrayed so much emotion, that his aunts observed it. They attributed it, however, to his own interesting situation, and nothing further of importance passed, that evening.

CHAP. IV.

Conclusion of a last Day at Harrogate.—Bustle.—Bills.—Hopes.

While what we have described was passing at the R——, Mrs. Glassington and her niece were not unemployed at their own abode: they appeared at dinner for the last time; and as their places were by this time next to those of the Chatterers, they underwent a sort of catechising, respecting the Mrs. Bonhams, and the wedding. Mabella thought it would not be right to repeat what she had heard, as it certainly was not intended to be repeated; but her aunt, less delicate, made no scruple of relating the quarrel; particularly as it gave her an opportunity of adding, that now the Mrs. Bonhams were at liberty to go down to pay a visit to her at Purlbeck. This

information seemed to astonish her auditors a little; however, they confined their observations to Mr. Bonham and Miss Moleson, affirming that Lady Brushwood had declared to them, when they saw her in the morning, that Mr. Bonham behaved quite like a savage to Miss Moleson, and seemed to be beginning his tyranny beforehand. "And, indeed," added Mrs Jack, "I dare say, those stiff old spinsters, his aunts, would think him quite in the right; but my lady, who is a woman of the world, and keeps the men in a proper degree of humiliation, was happily there to second Miss Moleson! for my part, no man on earth should take liberties with me! I'd teach him to know my weight in the world!" Mrs. Chatterer uttered this with an elevation of voice, and a certain energy of gesture, that, added to her large figure, which filled the head of the table, struck every one present, male and female. Those at a distance, who had not heard

what had gone before, imagined it an amorous attack that Mrs. Chatterer alluded to; and even those who had been better informed, perceived that the words would bear that construction. The circumstance was too ludicrous to be borne, and a universal laugh filled the room. Mrs. Chatterer had not expected this effect of her oratory, which she thought rather tending to strike people with awe and respect; and seeing that even a little pert looking waiter, who was removing the fish, laughed, and shook as he took up the dish, her warmth got the better of her discretion; and, lifting up her well fatted fist, she gave him such a tremendous blow on one ear, that he was no longer able to preserve his posture. He fell upon Mrs. Petman, who sat next her friend, and who, with the waiter, the dish of fish; two decanters half emptied, the castors; salt, wine glasses, beer glasses, knives, forks, spoons, and plates, was in a moment prostrate on the floor. Miss

Rebecca Chatterer, who sat next her, was overthrown by Mrs. Petman catching at her chair to save herself; and in five minutes the whole party was on foot, and congregating about the fallen. The master of the house, heart-struck as he stood with the remove for the top dish, anxiously beheld this renewal of what he called the devil's gambols, and raising his voice, he earnestly entreated that every body would sit still, and not increase the confusion. We have here a fine opportunity of comparing the effects of his efforts to those of a man whistling to the waves, or playing any other equally efficacious trick; for nothing could well produce less effect than his speech. It was lost in a variety of sounds, and a complete hurly-burly. This being the case, we shall spare our readers the simile, assuring them that they will find much better things of that kind in the now forgotten poets of ancient days, than any these modern times have produced.

Mrs. Chatterer rose; like Juno she turned her large ox eyes on those around her! like that gentle wife of Jove, she brandished a fist that might not unhappily have been termed on ox fist, and, like her she flew to the rescue of the now subdued Grecians; viz. Mrs. Petman and Rebecca. The landlord, who feared her interference, as much as Priam himself could have done, stepped before her, supplicating that she would let the ladies get up again; but she disregarded his sufferings, and giving him a push that almost overset him, and quite dislodged the joint he held—the dish he grasped with might and main—she seized Mrs. Petman, and attempted to raise her. This, with the assistance of a waiter, she accomplished; though not without so far deranging the gay widow's apparatus before, that she was fain to rush out of the room with a cry of despair, carrying the stuffing in her hand. Miss Rebecca was soon on her feet, looking Tisiphone her-

self; and those at the lower end of the room, many of whom came to Harrogate solely to eat, again began to employ their knives and forks on what was before them. And now the landlord busied himself in arranging the table, while his waiters picked up the dead men on the floor. Mrs. Chatterer sat fuming and panting in her chair, and a Leeds clothier called out lustily for the top dish. With a look of despair, that would have melted the hardest heart, the poor landlord exhibited it, spoiled and trampled upon; and said, that he hoped, as the ladies had spoiled it by their quarrels, the company would be satisfied with what there was on the table. It was not possible to get any thing else immediately. "Look ye, maister," cried the clothier, "it's now't to me what them there trash o'scalabrats does up oth' top there; I came here to fill my belly, and I can tell thee what—I'll noa muore pay for a whole dinner, when I've getten but a

shred o'yah; noa! noa muore then I'll spit guineas to please thee!"

This speech was received with great applause by some of his neighbours! and there was a cry of "Bring another dish; you may get lamb chops, or veal cutlets, or broiled fowls, or something: we'll none of us pay." The landlord trembled at such a menace; and he began to think that it was high time to know who was to pay. He sent a waiter to order something else to be done, and then said, that he was exceedingly sorry the company should be disappointed; but that he would do his best to satisfy them. That, however, he trusted the lady, who had thrown down the breast of veal, broken his glasses and decanters, and occasioned all this mischief, would not object to have it added to her bill; at the same time making a bow to Mrs. Chatterer. Many called out, "That's but fair; she ought to pay, certainly;" while the lady herself looked like a heaving mountain, ready to burst

forth in flame and smoke. "I assure you, Mr. What's-your-name, I shall pay for no veal, that you may be certain of," cried she, as soon as she could speak, "and what is more, I shall take care to make your character known, and to keep all my friends away from your house; such impudence is not bearable!"

"As to paying, my lady," said the landlord, "that the law can make you do; and if you set any false stories about me, the law will right me there too."

"Law!" cried the lady, "Great G— of Heaven! I shall find law for you, I fancy. I have nearly lost my life, more than once since I came here, and I believe you raise these kickups to rob your customers! I'll expose you!"

Had the landlord been prudent, he certainly would have been silent, and not farther exasperated a woman who had no principle, and malice and connexion enough to do him a serious injury; but his patience was exhausted, and he called

upon the company to observe the menace Mrs. Chatterer had thrown out, and to be ready to give testimony whenever called on, in his favour. The general indignation against Mrs. Chatterer was loudly expressed, and that lady, at last was compelled to retreat with her two nieces, declaring that she would not sleep another night in the house; to which the host replied, that he should take care she paid her bill before she went to another. Vain, however, is the boast of man! The bill was fairly drawn out, and as fairly transcribed by Nancy, the fair daughter of mine host, but Mrs. Chatterer boldly refused to pay a single farthing, unless the charge for the lost breast of veal was deducted; and, when at last this was done, she found other charges in her eyes equally monstrous: at length, after an hour's debate, that would not have disgraced financiers in a high assembly, that shall be nameless, a sort of compromise was made, the landlord received two-

thirds of his charge, (by which he did not gain above cent per cent.) and in consequence of his ceding the other third, the lady agreed to stay in his house that night, and protested on the word of a gentlewoman, that she meant nothing by her menace. Some time before Mrs. Chatterer had left the room, Mabella, depressed and frightened, had retreated with her aunt, and in her own room indulged in a hearty flood of tears, which seemed very much to relieve her spirits. She then set about preparing for her journey the following morning, and not all her aunt's entreaties could induce her to leave her apartment, or run the risk of meeting any of the persons whose presence might be disagreeable to her. Mrs. Glassington became very ill-humoured, declared that Bell was grown terribly obstinate, and, at last, under pretence that she must have some fresh air, left our poor heroine to her own reflections, and sallied forth to enjoy a walk with such

companions as she could find, and, in fact, to make a last effort for a husband. When she returned, she found Mabella in bed, and apparently inclined to sleep, but she had not consideration enough to let her indulge that inclination; she sat down on the bed, and began a most uninteresting detail of who and who were walking together, and who was come, and who were going. She had met Mr. Bonham all alone; but, instead of joining her, as a gentleman, she thought, ought to have done, he only slightly bowed, and blushed, as if he was ashamed to be seen speaking to her. Indeed, she said, she had no notion of such pride; and she certainly should tell his aunts how rude he had been! Mabella, with a sigh, begged she would not think of mentioning such folly; and, to divert her attention, asked who else she had seen? "Seen!" why child—but I don't know whether I should tell you or not—I have seen Croker; and he was to night even

more particular than in the morning! He asked me, whether my brother would object to a visit from him, and said something, I did not quite hear, about happiness. I told him I would promise him a kind reception; and he pressed my hand with a tenderness I have not felt since the last tender squeeze of my poor Glassington! Poor dear man! he's gone. Ah! time flies away fast, Bell; you should make hay while the sun shines! He left me a blooming young widow! and I must make haste, or I shall be a withered old one!" To this speech, and the sigh that accompanied it, our heroine returned no answer; for she had nothing to say: and Mrs. Glassington, whose mind was not unpleasingly occupied, proceeded to make her arrangements for the night, and to undress herself. This, however, was a much longer affair than the reader may imagine; for, during the ceremony, the good lady took occasion to try on several caps and gowns,

all of which, it is true she had worn before, but among which she could not exactly determine what was the most becoming: then she applied some harmless cosmetics to restore the brilliant whiteness of her skin; and, in short, so pleasingly did she employ herself, that unconscious of the lapse of time, she was somewhat alarmed, when she heard the clock strike two, and saw her candle nearly expiring. As the party was to be off in good time in the morning, she began to fear that the want of rest might diminish the lustre of her eyes, and prevent her appearing as beautiful as she intended in the sight of Mr. Croker. She hastened then to bed and in a short time was fast asleep.

CHAP. V.

Friendly Hopes.—An interesting Tête-à-tête.—A Newspaper.—Gratitude.—A Journey.—A Meeting.—An Arrival.

NOTWITHSTANDING Mabella's private reasons for depression of spirits, and the apprehension she felt lest any unguarded look or blush should betray her weakness to Mr. Bonham, or any one else, she was too truly happy in the thought of rejoining her papa and uncle, not to be ready to rise and dress herself with alacrity on the morning of her departure from Harrogate, and by eight o'clock she was quite prepared to set out. Her aunt, on the contrary, was in a continual bustle, dressing and undressing herself, as if she had nothing that was fit to appear in, and with every change growing more captious and more dissatisfied. At last she recol-

lected that the more time she passed in this way, the less she should have to give to Mr. Croker, and accepted Mabella's offer to finish packing her box. This was just completed, and the landlady was in the act of settling the bill with her, when Mr. Bonham's carriage arrived with a note to the ladies, desiring them to have their luggage put in it; and to favour their friends by coming to breakfast with them, so that the whole party being assembled, they might set out immediately after. But neither a sense of politeness, nor convenience could induce Mrs. Glassington to accept this invtation. She said she had paid for breakfast in the bill, and she would eat it; and she had something to say to Mr. Croker; and she had not taken leave of her friends; and that Mabella might go, and she would follow. With this Mabella was fain to comply; and it was not long before she found herself in Mrs. Bonham's parlour. Mrs. Mary was giving some orders to

her maid; Mrs. Sarah was making the tea, and Mr. Bonham, with great earnestness, was perusing the newspaper.

Mabella, while apologising for her Aunt's absence, contented herself with saying, that she had not quite settled her bill, or taken leave of her friends, and that to save time she would take her breakfast where she was, and come down, as soon as she could. "Very well, said Mrs. Mary," we must not complain, as she has so kindly sent us her niece to gratify us. Now tell me, truly, my dear Mabella, are you sorry to quit Harrogate, or not? "Oh dear no! very glad! I quite long to see my Papa and Uncle again! "answered Mabella," and I think, just now, that I should be glad, if I was to leave dear Purlbeck no more!"—"Upon my word, my dear, I shall do all I can to combat such a wish, and your love for the romantic woods, and oaks, and hills, and streams, from a selfish motive; "said Mrs.

Mary;" for I do hope that your Papa will lend you to us, ere long, and that when my niece and Felix are one, you will be kind enough to supply their place to us. But I see I am premature, and that if I made the request now, you would refuse me; so no more at present—we'll discuss the subject a month hence. What can there be, that so absorbs you in the paper, Felix? I wish you would entertain Miss Normanburn, while my sister and I conclude our orders, and accounts, in another room; the tea will be better for standing." So saying, the two Ladies left the room: and their two companions, each in as great an alarm, as if the discovery of their fatal secret was inevitable. An awful silence ensued, during which, Mabella rinced the tea-cups, repeating to herself the name of Cecilia Moleson, and Mr. Bonham, laying down the paper, hemmed once or twice, as if preparing to speak, or not knowing what to say:

at length, fearful that Mabella might think his silence odd, or rude, he asked her in a voice as cuttingly cold, as if he had been till that moment a stranger to her, whether she would not prefer having the window open? "If you please, Sir," said Mabella, in the same tone. The window was opened, and another silence ensued, almost as long as the first: this Mabella herself interrupted by saying, that she hoped her aunt would not be long before she came. "I hope not, ma'am!" said Felix.

Again Mabella was at a loss: she had tried to say something, which she hoped might lead to conversation, but the "I hope not," ended it. The truth was, that the scene on Pike hill, and their last parting occupied both minds, and each thought the other would feel it odd, if some mention were not made of what could hardly be forgotten.

With an effort that cost him something, Mr. Bonham at length said, "When we

last parted, Miss Normanburn, we both, I believe, suffered from the heavy rain that separated us, but I trust, you did not experience so much of its bad effects as myself. I trembled for you, I assure you."

"You are very good, Sir," answered Mabella, "it did me no harm though, for I changed my dress, as soon as I reached the cottage. I am sorry you were less fortunate!"

"Do you often visit that romantic spot, Miss Normanburn?" asked Felix.

"Never!" said Mabella.

Again there was a pause, for Felix was afraid to pursue the subject; it brought back recollections he had been labouring to stifle: at last he said, "Had I then known Miss Normanburn, to whom I was obliged for the preservation of my life, I should certainly have insisted on seeing you safe home; I cannot now think how I could be so remiss! I saw

you were no peasant; but there are moments, when presence of mind fails."

"You obliged me more by leaving me, Sir," said Mabella, "for, in again visiting the wood to seek Molly's handkerchief, I had been guilty of an act of disobedience, and I had a childish dread of discovery, though I was prompted to err, *only* by my wish to find, what poor Molly grieved so to lose." Unintentionally, Mabella laid great stress on the word *only*, and Felix remarked it: it immediately suggested to him, that he had betrayed, though he knew not how, some suspicion of another motive; and blushing slightly, he said, the motive was a sufficient excuse for the disobedience."

Again both were silent, and Mabella took up the paper Mr. Bonham had been reading: she turned it about once or twice, as if she could not find any subject to interest her, and her companion observed, that there was no news. "There

has been a dreadful thunder-storm in Scotland, I see," said Mabella, and, at the moment, she raised her eyes to her companion, who was then looking towards her. The gratitude Miss Normanburn felt for her own preservation in a similar storm, was visible in her countenance, and gave a softness and tenderness to her voice, that, in the present state of Mr. Bonham's feelings, was more than he could bear; he snatched up his hat and was quitting the room, when his aunts returned; and in answer to their question of should he breakfast with them, he replied that he would be with them in less than a quarter of an hour.

"I don't think Felix looks well to-day," said Mrs. Sarah, "he never used to be subject to that sort of nervous irritability, and flushing; you saw his colour, sister? I could fancy him quite feverish."

"We had better do that, and make ourselves comfortable at once, my dear," answered Mrs. Mary; "to own the truth,

I do see no malady in Felix but what the willing obedience, and kind considerations of Cecilia would remove in half an hour. He is thoroughly vexed and uncomfortable; and though I do not like to take part with the men against my own sex, I must own it is with some reason. I wish he would go down to Purlbeck with us; it really would be a proper punishment for Miss Moleson. Don't you think it would, Miss Normanburn?"

"I think it would be very wrong," said Mabella; "for Miss Moleson could not intend to displease Mr. Bonham, that would be quite impossible, I think."

"Oh, no! it was all Lady Brushwood's doing, I know," cried Mrs. Mary, "and if Felix were not one of the most considerate, and amiable men in the world, she might have made an eternal breach between them. But Felix loves Cecilia too tenderly not to make every allowance for the influence under which she acts." Happy Cecilia! thought Mabella

to herself, and Mr. Bonham soon after re-entering, the conversation took a new turn.

Breakfast was concluded, and the packages all put in the carriage without Mrs. Glassington making her appearance, to the great dismay of Mabella, who felt sorry, and ashamed at her aunt's want of punctuality; and, at last, requested that she might be permitted to send a waiter to hasten her coming: to this Mr. Bonham objected, and taking his hat, he said he would himself have the pleasure of seeking Mrs. Glassington. It was not very long before he returned with that lady in no very good humour, as he had interrupted a conversation between her and Mr. Croker, at what she thought a critical period; she, however made her apology in due form, and Mr. Bonham having handed his aunts and their friends into the carriage, Mabella bid adieu to Harrogate, and with unfeigned pleasure, turned her face towards Purlbeck.

A beautiful day, an elegant carriage, pleasing companions, and the happy thought of soon seeing her dear relatives, from whom her separation had seemed so long, gave Mabella spirits, and a look of animated contentment, that formed a striking contrast to the almost ludicrous fretfulness, that pervaded her aunt's features; she said little, but she answered her friends observations with an intelligent smile, that seemed to shew the mind was right within.

When they came within view of the woods of Brushwood, Mrs. Sarah sighed, and wished that Cecilia had been a little more complying; to which Mrs. Glassington replied, that she thought Miss Moleson was right to have her own way, while she could have it. "You maiden ladies," said she, "can have no notion how tyrannical the men, even the best of them, can be at times, and I think, when once a thing is settled, so that a man cannot in honour run off, it is fair enough for a wo-

man to enjoy her day: it is all slavery afterwards."

"Really, my dear Mrs. Glassington, you quite make me rejoice in my maiden state," said Mrs. Mary, "for I have a natural horror of slavery of any kind, and I felicitate you on being once more free to follow your own devices;—you will not, of course, a second time encounter so formidable a yoke!"

"Nay! I don't know that, neither!" said the widow, with a foolish titter, and a sly leer; "there's no knowing what one's fate is." This speech made Mabella blush, and her friends with difficulty suppressed a smile, which passed unobserved by Mrs. Glassington, who was looking at a party of horsemen coming towards them, though yet at a considerable distance.

"By the direction they come from, and the largeness of the party, I should suppose it is a detachment from the Park going to Harrogate," said Mrs. Mary:

"they are probably intending to carry Felix back with them."

When they at last met, the first who passed the carriage were Lady Pleasance Sniddy, and the Hon. Capt. Gander, who both looked into the carriage without seeming to see any thing; the next were Lord Sniddy, commonly called Lord Billy Sniddy by his intimates, and Miss Trehern; they thought it necessary to stop the carriage, and pay their compliments, and while they were doing so, Miss Moleson and Mr. Angelo Lightfoot came up. "This is an unexpected pleasure, Cecilia," said Mrs. Mary, reddening with vexation at seeing by whom she was accompanied, "and I hope you are now on your way to sing your recantation; it is not yet too late: I am yet at your service." "I thank you, Madam," returned Cecilia, "but when I know I am right, I cannot change my course; I am merely taking a ride!"

Mrs. Mary shook her head, and Miss

Trehern, sighing deeply, said in a sort of under tone to Lightfoot, "How cruel to my Cecilia;" to which he replied, by shrugging his shoulders. Miss Moleson then bowed formally to Mabella and her aunt, and kissing her hand to her own aunts, the two parties proceeded on their way, and those, about whom we are most interested, arrived in due time within sight of Normanburn, Pike hill, and the village of Burnthwaite: the whole company, though differently prompted, burst into tears. Mrs. Bonhams wept a lost friend, Mabella paid the last tribute to an unfortunate predilection, and Mrs. Glassington shed tears for the state of seclusion to which she was returning. The drops were, however, soon brushed away, and by the time the ladies reached the village green, their countenances were once more composed; nay, Mrs. Glassington's was even triumphant, for she had the pleasure of driving over the green, and within sight of all their neighbours in a smart

equipage, and when, at last, the man stopped, as he was ordered, at the Parsonage, Mr. Middlemist was at the door with the Bleatheads to welcome her home. The greetings, and introductions, and kind inquiries on all sides, we pass over; suffice it to say, that it being now, as Mrs. Glassington had supposed it would, the good Parson's holidays, he was not sorry to turn a penny in an honourable way, by letting his apartments to the ladies, and this important affair being arranged to the satisfaction of all parties, and the ladies once more in their carriage, they were soon transported to the garden door of Purlbeck Cottage, where, they found the Captain driving out a pig that had transgressed by entering the sacred inclosure.

The carriage no sooner stopped than Mabella leaped from it, and threw herself into his arms, where she was tenderly welcomed; then leaving her aunt to conduct her friends, she ran up to her papa,

and was received by him with a tenderness and delight, that made her happier than she had been for a long time; nay, so pleased was he, that he forgot to be nervous, and accompanying her down stairs, actually said something very polite, and pleasing to his new vititors.

CHAP. VI.

Which being a Sort of Hodge-Podge, we leave it to the Reader to find out its Contents.

The arrival of the Mrs. Bonhams at Purlbeck formed a new era, not only in the history of the Normanburns, but in that of the Bleatheads and Middlemist; who all were treated with considerate allowances for the disadvantages they laboured under by their new acquaintances; and the latter gentleman became so great a favourite with them, that no day passed, on which he did not make one of their party. Every day some pleasant ride relieved the Captain from the tedium of beholding always the same objects, and Mr. Normanburn seemed to have commenced a new existence: in short, all were happy. Mrs. Glassington was too proud of her company, and too busy to have time for

regrets, and Mabella seemed as if she had in Mrs. Bonhams discovered dear friends, and relatives. If there was any discontent, it was in the bosoms of these ladies, who, during the first ten days, received no intelligence from their nephew or niece, and they became really anxious, as they had rather expected Felix over to see them. One evening, however, as they were all sitting enjoying their tea in the garden, Dr. Stunt (we hope our readers have not forgotten him) arrived, hat in hand, and as soon as he had recovered his breath, he presented a letter to Mrs. Mary, saying that he was just come from Brushwood Park, and that Mr. Bonham had desired him to leave it. "I promise you, Madam, there's fine junketting there!" said the Doctor, "they have a house full, I promise you, and every night some fine concert or play, that caps t' playhouse itself, they say. I've been very busy for this last week for t' lax has been rife, so I've not paid my respects to my

lady; bud to-day I took her i'my round, and, thank God, they're all pretty well; pretty middling, that is! I fancied Miss Moleson looked peeky-ish; bud they say it's nobbut matrimony hanging over her."

"Aye, that's the clergy's affair, not your's, Doctor," said Middlemist. "I know that, to my sorrow! but my turn may come 'fore t' parson's yet!" cried Stunt, with a loud laugh.

Mrs. Bonhams had by this time retired to read their letter, and we shall follow them, and leave the rustic party to their mirth: they found Mr. Bonham's letter, as follows:

"*To Mrs. Bonhams.*

"MY DEAR AUNTS,

"If my visit to this place had produced any satisfactory result, you would have heard from me sooner; but

having nothing pleasing to impart, I was unwilling to write at all. Soon after you left Harrogate, I set off for the Park, and met Cecilia and her party (whom you saw), before I had gone two miles. I returned with them here, and here I remain, I frankly confess, not from choice, but from what I consider a call of duty. In the little intercourse I have had with Cecilia alone (and it is less than, situated as we are, you would believe possible), I have represented to her the inconvenience our stay here, longer than the next fortnight or three weeks, will subject us to; as one of us, at least, must reside a month at York, to enable us to marry from your house: but I cannot persuade her to shorten her stay here—a crowd of uninteresting people, it seems, has more charms for her than—but I will not say the unhandsome thing, though I cannot help feeling it—it is certainly inconsiderate.

"Cecilia once named the week after the races—on this I must insist—but how to accomplish it, if we so long defer our journey to York! Cecilia smiles when I urge the matter; but she listens to her Miss Trehern, not to me: the truth is, I cannot long remain thus undecided. I hope you are enjoying this delightful season with your new friends; I cannot have the pleasure of riding over. We have here some nonsense all day long. Pray let me know when you leave Purlbeck, that I may meet you at Harrogate. My compliments to your friends. Cecilia joins me in love to you both.

"Your affectionate

"F. B.

"*Brushwood Park, Thursday.*"

"How very unlike one of Bonham's letters this is!" cried Mrs. Mary, when she had read it; "and how truly uncom-

fortable he appears to be! What can Cecilia mean? how can she like to have a crowd about her, at such a time! I wonder whether Lightfoot is there, or not! if not, we might ride over, to call on Cecilia. I'll ask this original apothecary."

To Mrs. Bonham's great delight, Mr. Stunt informed her, that old Mr. Lightfoot was gone to Scarborough, and Mr. Angelo had left the country above a week before, with Sir Thistleton Hockham! There was then no fear of meeting any body they would not like to meet, and they determined that evening, that they would spend the following day at Brushwood Park.

The morning then, instead of bringing the two ladies, brought a note to the Purlbeck family, to inform them of this absence; and Mabella, as she perused it, could not avoid feeling a sickly sensation; for, not knowing the contents of Mr. Bonham's letter, she naturally con-

cluded that it was a call to his aunts to assist in making the final arrangements for the celebration of his nuptials. "It is all right, and what I expected, and ought to rejoice at," said she to herself; "he will be happy; he has long loved his cousin—and I will be happy too—if I can."

Thus resolved, Mabella employed herself in domestic duties till dinner-time; and exerted herself to supply, at that meal, the absence of her friends by her own increased liveliness: she succeeded so well; that her uncle could not help observing, how much a little mixing with the world, and good company, had improved her natural powers of conversation; and her papa said, she would be an excellent companion, when she had a little proper reading. Mabella received pleasure in giving pleasure; and she felt that it was possible to be happy without possessing all we wish. She, however, longed to see Mrs. Bonhams; certainty

would, she thought, be so very satisfactory; she should prefer it to the slightest doubt: not that it was possible that any thing could again prevent this union; but still, it might—it had once—but even this would make no difference, as Mr. Bonham *tenderly loved Cecilia*, those were the words—and what is tenderly loved, can never be *unloved*, thought Mabella.

About four o'clock in the afternoon, Jacky Walker, mounted on his stick, made his appearance at Purlbeck, having a letter to deliver to Mrs. Glassington; and so punctual was he, that when Mabella offered to take it to give to her aunt, he refused, crying, "Aye, bairn, aye! t'auld woman——" The Captain was present when she took it; and looking a little surprized, and curious, Mrs. Glassington told him, with a significant toss, that he would find she did not go into the world for nothing. She retired

to her own room, to read it, and found it from Mr. Croker, in these terms—

"*To Mrs. Glassington.*

"DEAREST MADAM,

"You did me the honour to promise me a kind reception from Mr. Normanburn and Captain Normanburn; and I am now at Burnthwaite, hoping that I may have permission to wait on you at Purlbeck this evening. It would give me great pleasure to see you before I see Mr. Normanburn. As you can be no stranger to my wishes, I rely on your goodness to make my compliments agreeable, where I am most anxious they should be so.

"I am,

"Dearest Madam,

"Your sincerely devoted

"R. CROKER.

"*Flask, Burnthwaite.*"

This letter, though it raised Mrs. Glassington to the height of happiness, occasioned her no small embarrassment, for she had not yet found any opportunity of rendering her brothers propitious to Mr. Croker, and she dared not bring him to the cottage, unauthorized: she considered some time what she should do; and, at last, determined to go and drink tea with Mrs. Bleathead, as she could then send for him, and enjoy a charming interview uninterrupted by any spiteful relations. This was no sooner determined than executed, and she returned under the escort of Jacky Walker. She had no difficulty in persuading Mrs. Bleathead, who was her confidante, to accommodate her with an apartment, and Mr. Croker was invited to take his tea at the Parsonage.

Mrs. Glassington betrayed so much faltering emotion at seeing him, and so ill concealed her exultation at having secured so gallant a lover, that had the

Captain really wished to make her his wife, he would have been perfectly satisfied no obstacles would arise on the lady's part; as it was, he imagined that she was affected with something that had passed respecting him in her own family, and feared that the Mr. Normanburns were unpropitious to his wishes. He was, of course, too delicate to hint even at the subject in the presence of the Bleatheads; but, as soon as they quitted the room, he asked whether he was right in supposing that Mr. Normanburn was unfavourable to his wishes? There was something so unloverlike in this demand, when the lady rather expected to have heard him thank her for her condescension in granting him this interview, that she remained some moments silent, and even forgot the languish she was acting; but, at last, she answered—"Why, really, Sir, to own the truth, I have never yet had a favourable opportunity of mentioning your tender aspirations to

my brother—nor—any farther than—permitting your visits at Purlbeck, do I think it of importance. If *I*——" Here the lady stopped; and the lover, thinking she meant to imply that *her* consent was sufficient, replied, that he was fully aware of the value of her approbation, but that he was most anxious to be received by the *whole* family, as such a mark of esteem would doubtless have its weight, *where* he was conscious he should need all the interest he could secure. Again, Mrs. Glassington was startled; she thought, as perhaps the reader will, that she had been explicit enough, and that she could not well go further in this stage of the business; she remained silent then, and exhibited a countenance of such ludicrous perplexity, that Croker himself could hardly help smiling. He longed to know what occasioned it; and taking her hand, which he pressed respectfully to his lips, he apologized for the pain he saw she suffered, and begged

to know from what quarter was the opposition that alarmed her. "I hope not from Miss Normanburn, Madam?" said he. "Surely, my hopes are not thus crushed at the very commencement of——"

"From Miss Normanburn? certainly not!" answered Mrs. Glassington, "my will must be hers in this case, Mr. Croker; but, at present, I have no opportunity of discussing a subject so every way interesting, either with her or my brothers; and, to own the truth, as clandestine proceedings would in such a case be too foolish, there is no occasion for them, where all are free and independent! I believe, that for the present you must be contented to live on hope, and the assurance that your mistress is not quite insensible to your tender wishes."

So sweet an assurance threw Mr. Croker into raptures, expressed, perhaps, not quite so delicately as some more refined lover might have done; but as, in the

absence of his mistress, he could not refrain from giving her kind aunt many tender looks and squeezes, Mrs. Glassington remained perfectly satisfied that she was the principal in this affair. This, however, did not last long, for Croker, who had made up his own mind on the business, was desirous to have it concluded, and, as a preliminary step, was very anxious to see Mabella. He thought, after what had passed, he might venture to ask, whether she would see him or not, which he prefaced by inquiring, if Mrs. Glassington had told her of his arrival?

"Told Mabella?" said the lady; "indeed I did not tell her, or any one else, that you were here; as you could not come to Purlbeck without running the risk of being affronted, the fewer people knew the better."

"But, Miss Normanburn! my dear Mrs. Glassington! surely, if all is as I hope it is—surely she might have been

informed how solicitous I was—Ah! Mrs. Glassington, you do not enter into my feelings—indeed you do not!"

"Indeed, dear Mr. Croker, I do," said Mrs. Glassington; "and to convince you of it, I will this very night mention your arrival, and the cause of it, to my brothers. They cannot be so foolish and illiberal, as to oppose my wishes for a mere prejudice; but if they do—I shall still preserve my own resolves."

"But Miss Normanburn! dear Madam! May I see *her* to-morrow" cried Croker.

"To be sure—why not?" said Mrs. Glassington.

"Then to-morrow I shall hear from you; let it be early, dear Madam; or why should not I accompany you home to-night—why defer the interview till to-morrow?" said Croker.

The lady could not very well tell why he should not, though she had a presen-

timent of something unpleasant, and as no time was to be lost, the good people wished Mrs. Bleathead good night, and walked over to the cottage. It so happened, that nothing passed on the road to undeceive Mrs. Glassington, and she shewed Mr. Croker into the parlour, where, she said, she would send Mabella, to keep him company, while she talked to her brother. Croker desired nothing better; but, unfortunately, Mabella and the Captain were enjoying the evening breezes at a short distance behind the house, and he was necessarily constrained to amuse himself.

After waiting about half an hour, Mrs. Glassington returned, accompanied by her brother, who received Mr. Croker with an air of great haughtiness and reserve; indeed he was barely civil to him, and evidently agitated with seeing him.

As soon as the lady had introduced

Mr. Croker, she left the room, taking care, however, not to shut the door, and to stand so near, as not to lose a word of the conversation. It was some time before it began; but Croker, auguring well for his offer, which, as he was rich, he imagined was worth acceptance, at last broke silence, by saying, that he imagined Mr. Normanburn was not unacquainted with his wishes, and that he hoped they met his approbation and concurrence.

"My sister, Mrs. Glassington, Sir, tells me, that you have a business of some importance to my family to impart to me," said Mr. Normanburn; "and knowing the concern your late father had in all the Normanburn affairs, my sister has persuaded me to give you a hearing."

Poor Mr. Croker now found that he must break the ice himself, and without much confusion, he said—

"The business, Mr. Normanburn, is

one that nearly concerns my own happiness. I had the honour to be in the same house with Mrs. Glassington and Miss Normanburn, at Harrogate—"

"Well, Sir, and what then?" said Mr. Normanburn, in a stern accent.

"Nothing, but what was very natural, Sir," said Croker. "I could not avoid my destiny. I own I was charmed, Mr. Normanburn, and I now come to solicit permission to offer myself and my fortune to your enchanting daughter." As Croker pronounced the word *daughter*, Mr. Normanburn uttered "D—n—tion!" with a voice of thunder, that made both Croker and Mrs. Glassington start, and prevented the latter from hearing what would effectually have undeceived her; but, finding that her brother was in this humour, she began to fear Croker would be so much offended as to change his intention, so, walking into the room before he could reply, she

asked Mr. Normanburn what was the matter.

"The matter is, that we have lived to be insulted by those that have fattened on our spoils," cried Mr. Normanburn; "but never shall the Normanburns condescend to mix with their own servants, I vow by my Maker; and as you brought this young man here, doubtless deceived as to his intention, I desire you will dismiss him as he deserves." He then stalked out, breathing quick and short, and left Croker almost as angry as himself.

"Good God!" cried Mrs. Glassington, "this is what I dreaded; my brother is so odd, Mr. Croker! but, as I said before, my brother's opinion makes no difference in mine—I cannot change."

"You are very good, Madam," answered Croker, coldly; "but, after what Mr. Normanburn has said, I can hardly

hope for Miss Normanburn's consent to listen to me, nor, perhaps, would it be wise to ask it."

"Well! and what then?" cried the lady, astonished; "is *her* consent so very necessary to us?"

"To *us!*" repeated Croker, now perceiving on what idea Mrs. Glassington had been acting.

"Yes, Sir; am I not of years to choose for myself? and need I have the approbation of every individual of my house, when I have once resolved to bestow my heart and hand on a worthy man?"

To this question, asked by the lady in a tone of reproach, Mr. Croker gave no answer: he seemed to be in deep meditation; nay, in truth, he was; for he was meditating how to escape, this once, from a woman who seemed resolved to secure him; but she was between him and the door, and he was compelled to remain.

At last, still hoping that he had not deceived himself with regard to Mabella's favourable inclination towards him, he said, "It would gratify me, Madam, to be allowed to see Miss Normanburn—may I not be obliged?"

Mrs. Glassington was on the point of giving a decided negative to this request, when Mabella ran in to inquire of her aunt whether the Mrs. Bonhams were returned. She looked surprised to see Mr. Croker; but she received him with politeness; and, fearful that she had intruded on Mrs. Glassington's conversation with him, she apologized, saying, she was not aware her aunt had company.

And now, as Mrs. Glassington made no movement to retire, Mr. Croker was again at a loss, for he felt that she having deceived herself, what he wished to say to Mabella would be construed by her into a direct insult: he remained, then,

ludicrously silent, and looked as if he wished himself any where else.

"Well, Sir," cried the impatient widow, "here is Miss Normanburn! you may now ask *her consent*, that you seem so anxious to get!"

"My consent! to what?" said Mabella.

"To his marriage with me, child!" said Mrs. Glassington.

"Oh dear, aunt! I'm sure, if you and Mr. Croker have each other's consent, you cannot want mine! but, if you do, I give it most heartily, I assure you; and wish you both very happy! Mr. Croker seems a worthy man, and I shall be glad to have him for an uncle!"

This speech, rather archly delivered, satisfied Mr. Croker; he snatched up his hat, and, brushing past the ladies, and the Captain, who was in the passage, hastened out of the house, and returned home as speedily as possible. As to

Mrs. Glassington, she was satisfied that her brother's violence, and his own passion, had deprived him of his senses, and she went to bed without her supper, and cried herself to sleep.

CHAP. VII.

The pleasing Prospect of Pleasure, with the Danger of Recollections.

The return of Mrs. Bonhams, the following morning, probably saved Mrs. Glassington from the reproaches of her brothers, who were so heartily ashamed of the part she had acted, though they knew not the extent of her folly, that they did not wish to have the subject mentioned. Mr. Croker's visit then was passed over in silence; and, as Mrs. Glassington heard no more from him, she was content not to mention him. To her inquiries after Miss Moleson, and her *dear*, as she called Felix, Mrs. Mary replied generally, that Miss Moleson was pretty well; and that they themselves having been constrained to

promise Lady Brushwood to be present on the following Thursday at an entertainment to be given to an Illustrious Personage, they had likewise promised to use their interest to persuade Mrs. Glassington and her niece to accompany them; indeed, that was the only condition on which they could resolve to keep their promise. "We wish you to go, my dear Mabella," said Mrs. Mary, "on many accounts; and as you have but few opportunities of seeing distinguished characters, we would not have you to neglect this. Lady Brushwood will of course call herself, to invite you."

Mabella's little heart fluttered with pleasing emotion at this proposal, and her aunt expressed her delight loudly. Mr. Normanburn was gratified at the attention shewn to his family, and the Captain kissed his niece, and said, this was as it ought to be. He, however, inquired whether it might not be possible that the Lightfoots would be there; but Mrs. Mary

said, "Certainly not: if there had not been a perfect assurance of that, she would not have agreed to go to the Park." Sometimes the idea of meeting Mr. Bonham threw a damp over Mabella's pleasure when she thought of this visit; but, fully persuaded that he could not from his situation, even if he wished it, have any attentions to spare for her, she hoped that nothing could possibly arise to make her repent accepting the invitation.

On the afternoon of Sunday, Lady Brushwood, accompanied by Mr. Bonham in her phaeton, called at the cottage: she was perfectly polite and well bred, and expressed great pleasure in having been able to collect quite a blaze of beauty to gratify her illustrious visitor.

While Mr. Bonham entertained his aunts and Mr. Normanburn, her Ladyship chatted to the Captain and the ladies of his family, and after remaining about half an hour, left them fully persuaded, that they had been mistaken at

Harrogate in supposing her proud and insolent. She begged that they would come on Wednesday to dinner, and remain till Friday, and to this they consented. Mr. Bonham took no more notice of Mabella, or her aunt, than the common usages of society exacted from him; and so cuttingly cold was the tone of his voice, when he hoped Miss Normanburn was very well, that even Mrs. Mary observed it. She mentioned his reserve, his distant politeness, and his coldness, to her sister when they were alone; and ascribed the whole to the mortification Cecilia's obstinacy had occasioned: "I am sure Felix is unhappy, my dear," said she, "and, I fear that he is more deeply hurt than he has expressed even to us; I did not expect, that with his sensibility and acuteness of feeling, he would in his present situation be as lively as usual; but I did hope to see that sedate sort of exhilaration, if I may so call it, that speaks a mind at the

summit of its wishes. He looks absolutely dissatisfied,—what can be going on at the Park? Cecilia's mere staying there cannot be all. There is something else, depend upon it! I wish Cecilia would fix the day."

"To tell you the truth," replied Mrs. Sarah, "I begin to imagine that Cecilia's indifference respecting that very day, has made Felix think her less attached to him than she was; and yet, I'm sure, he is mistaken there! Cecilia doats on him!"

"I wish Cecilia would shew her doating by her obedience!" cried Mrs. Mary; "if she could see the change in Felix as we do, she would tremble either for her future happiness, or for the health of her husband,—but I will talk seriously to her, I am determined." With this determination Mrs. Mary went to bed, and when she arose in the morning, it was to plan a little excursion for the day to W——, to procure proper dresses for the approaching fête. When the carriage took them

down to Purlbeck, it was ordered to wait, and as soon as breakfast was over the four ladies set off to Mrs. Lama the milliner's at W——. As they drove up to the door, a carriage moved off to make way for them, and they immediately recognised the Brushwood arms and liveries, and Mr. Bonham seated in the barouche, reading a newspaper. His aunts called to him, and he immediately attended to hand them from the carriage; expressing his surprise at seeing them. "We are equally surprised, believe me, Felix, to see you waiting so Patience-like at a milliner's door," said Mrs. Mary: "I take it for granted your lady-love is within. Come, Mabella, my dear, give your hand to Felix, and follow your aunt." Mabella would have waited till her friends had descended; but she was naturally too well-bred to need bidding twice; she put her hand in that of Felix: she recollected—how could she help recollecting?—when it was last in his; and being somewhat agi-

tated, she felt her head swim, and, if he had not caught her in his arms, she would have fallen. " Poor dear child," said Mrs. Mary, as she followed her nephew, who carried Mabella into the shop, " it is riding backward in the carriage, that has made her giddy; I saw her colour change, as we drove up to the door." Mabella had not fainted; she heard all that passed, and, happy to have such an excuse made for her weakness, she only said, she was sorry to have given so much trouble. She looked round to thank Mr. Bonham, but he was gone, and left word with the servant to inform him, at the neighbouring coffee-room, when the ladies were ready to return to the Park. Mrs. Bonham felt half angry at what she called his rudeness and insensibility, and the party then adjourned to the fashion-room up stairs, where they found Miss Trehern, sitting before a glass, trying on morning caps.

" All alone, Miss Trehern?" cried Mrs.

Sarah, "I thought Cecilia was with you; what have you done with her?"

"Bless me, my dear Mrs. Bonham! you quite startled me, I declare," cried Miss Trehern, blushing crimson; "I never once thought of seeing you here! it is an unexpected felicity! My Cecilia did you ask for? she was here a moment ago,—I fancy she is with Mrs. Lama, trying on a dress!"

"If that is the case," said Mrs. Mary, "you and I, Mabella, will have a peep at it; which way must we go to find the lady, Ma'am?" to the young woman who attended. The young woman gave no answer, she looked at Miss Trehern, who, opening a door at her end of the room, said, she supposed that was the way to the dress-room. Mrs. Mary was about to leave the room by this door, when Miss Moleson entered by that the rest of the company had, and, forcing a smile through an air of chagrin, she expressed great pleasure in seeing her aunts and her

friends. A conversation on dress and fashions then took place, which, could we record it, would no doubt be highly edifying to the rising generation; and after about an hour's deliberation, Mabella, as well as the rest of the party, was furnished with an elegant dress, as a present from Mrs. Bonhams, and the carriages were ordered to the door. But now it was recollected, that shoes, fans, and gloves had been forgotten, and another half hour had elapsed, and even then, when the ladies went down, Mr. Bonham was not in attendance. Miss Moleson expressed great displeasure at this; she said that really Felix now minded none of the little attentions he used formerly to observe, and she could fancy herself a six months wife! it was really unpardonable! Mrs. Mary shook her head, and bid her not trifle away her happiness, at the same time really wondering that her nephew did not come: but by the time she and her party were seated in the carriage, her wonder

ceased, and he made his appearance, bowing, ironically to the lecture Miss Trehern gave him, and respectfully to his aunts and their party: as to Cecilia, she did not even speak to him, and the two parties separated, till they were to meet at Brushwood Park.

The adventures of the morning, so far from furnishing the ladies with subjects for conversation, seemed to have deprived them of the use of their tongues, and they did not utter half a dozen sentences on their way home. Mrs. Glassington was entirely occupied with her new dresses, and her visits; Mabella, with regret for her weakness, and good resolutions for the future; and the two aunts with quite as unpleasing reflections on the state of their nephew's mind: at dinner, however, they recovered their cheerfulness, and the Bleatheads and Middlemist came in the afternoon, and diverted them with a long debate on the account of the haunting of Mr. Mompesson's house at Tedworth, by

the malicious Drummer, which, had it occurred earlier in our history, we should have given to the reader; but we have now more interesting matter: suffice it to say, that Middlemist so wrought on Mr. Normanburn and Bleathead by his sceptical queries and observations, that both were ready to fall on him, with other weapons than their tongues; and, at last, Mr. Normanburn, in order to silence him, adduced his own case, when *he*, the now doubting Middlemist, had seen that very claw and tail, that had before seized the sacred leg of the Parson, and the proof that it was a demon was, that from that time he, Mr. Normanburn, had been free from the visitation! Middlemist answered, with great gravity, that *that* was a peculiar case; and Bleathead vowed he had yet the *cockatrice* upon his leg, and he believed he should have, to the latest hour of his life. He then described the attack, and vowed that such

mortal fear never seized him since the hour of his birth!

"No, my dear," cried his wife, "I believe you there! I know t' penomeena as ran atween your legs was nothing to 't. For my part, I think you're main unlucky in them there unnatural affairs! and after all it was too bad to be clicked by a cockatrice! may be Mr. Middlemist there can tell *who* set it on!"

"Indeed, my good Madam, I cannot do that!" said Middlemist, "but I fancy it was no man that did it!"

"No! likely so!" answered the lady; "but you know the Scripture talks of the cockatrice' den!"

Somehow or other, this made all the company laugh, and in such like pleasant discourse passed that day and the next; and, at four o'clock on Wednesday, the ladies were set down at the door of Lord Brushwood's house.

But, what passed there will demand a chapter by itself, which is a sufficient reason for our closing this, and wishing the reader a good night's repose before he or she begins the next.

CHAP. VIII.

Adventures at Brushwood.—The Picture.—A Lover, with a Variety of Matter.

It has been observed by many wise and observant people, that there is no pleasure without alloy; and our poor heroine, whose little heart beat high with delight at the thought of enjoying the amusements of Brushwood, found her newly suppressed inclination, and all the fears it brought with it, but too corrective of any extravagant emotions of rapture. However, her last interview with Mr. Bonham had been of infinite service to her; it had convinced her that he was not that attentive, gentle, winning companion, or polite acquaintance, she had imagined him, and that she had nothing to fear from having her feelings excited by any approxi-

mation to intimacy on his part: while, at the same time, it had made her but too sensible that she must keep a constant guard over her own feelings, and not indulge in a retrospective glance. "I will not shun Mr. Bonham," said she to herself. "I will accustom myself to see and hear him, and then I need not fear going to York with my kind friends.—I shall have no reason.—I shall be able to see and hear him with indifference!" Armed with this resolve, and full of dread of indulging a dishonourable or unprincipled thought, Mabella walked with great serenity into Lady Brushwood's drawing-room, at the door of which she heard her friends and herself announced by a very fine gentleman in a very dignified tone. Her Ladyship received them most graciously, and presented them to about half a dozen people who were with her. "I don't know where the young people have disposed themselves to-day," said she, "but I fancy they are in the grounds:

they shall be informed of your arrival." She then gave orders to that effect, and an uninteresting conversation filled up the time till the entrance of Miss Moleson, leaning on the arm of Miss Trehern. Her colour was a good deal heightened by hurrying to meet her atints, and she looked so exceedingly beautiful, and smiled so sweetly, that Mabella did not wonder her cousin was so tenderly attached to her. She, indeed, formed a striking contrast to her friend Miss Trehern, who was pale, sallow, and languid, and stooped so much, from an affectation of delicacy and interesting weakness, that it was painful to contemplate her.

"What have you done with the beaux, Cecilia?" asked Lady Brushwood: "I suppose they were of your party." "No, indeed, my Lady! they formed some scheme of their own, two hours ago, and my Angelina and my cousins joined me in a ramble in the woods," answered Miss Moleson. "Where is Bonham?" said

her Ladyship. "I don't know," said Cecilia.

Mabella had hardly had time to wonder at the indifference with which Miss Moleson seemed to speak, when Felix made his appearance. "I heard, by chance, that you were arrived," said he to his aunts: "I met your man in the hall.—Cecilia, you would have obliged me by sending me word that such was the case."

"So I would, if I had known where to find you, Cousin," answered Cecilia. Mr. Bonham made no reply to this; but he looked significantly at Miss Trehern, who averted her eyes, and sighed tenderly. Mr. Bonham then accosted Mrs. Glassington, and hoped Mabella had had no return of her giddiness. As this passed amidst a set of people, who were all talking on various topics, a good deal of it might have been unnoticed by those less interested than the Mrs. Bonhams: but, as one motive for visiting Lady

Brushwood had been a wish to talk seriously to Cecilia, they were particularly on the alert to observe every part of her behaviour.

And now Lady Brushwood proposed to adjourn to the Library to examine some views of the finest prospects in the grounds of Brushwood, done by a young artist whom she patronised, and who was then in the house. To this proposal most of the party acceded; and Felix, who himself drew very finely, accompanied them. Some of the views were beautiful, and Felix disposed the paintings so as to shew them to the best advantage, generously desirous to increase the reputation of a deserving young man. Many persons gave unqualified praise, some stared in stupid apathy, and some shrugged their shoulders, and cried, "Vastly well! vastly well, indeed! nice tints! very nice! great merit! monstrous great!"

Mabella, who had never seen any thing so beautiful in her life, examined them

with a pleasure that was visible to the whole company; and though she was too modest to give an opinion on what she did not understand, Mr. Bonham observed, that she dwelt longest on what was best; and had, though she did not know it, a natural tact, that is more worth than all connoisseurs can teach.

While this was going on, Cecilia and Miss Trehern retired to a couch, where they were soon joined by the Lady Sniddys, and about half a dozen young men; and their perception that any body else was in the room could only be supposed from the looks Miss Trehern every now and then gave Felix, and the smile of wonder, if not of contempt, with which the rest of the ladies eyed Mabella.

Mr. Bonham had already exhibited the six views, when he observed a picture of smaller dimensions under the silver paper. he had laid his hand on it to uncover it, when Lady Brushwood cried out, "On your life, forbear, my good Mr. Showman,

that picture was a present to me from Lightfoot, and I dare not exhibit it in the *present company!*" at the same time glancing her eye towards his aunts and Mrs. Glassington. "Oh dear! don't, pray, make strangers of us! we don't quarrel with pictures!" said Mrs. Mary.

"Thank you, my dear Mrs. Mary," replied her Ladyship, with an ironical smile, and at the same time producing a beautiful drawing of that spot, and that individual oak under whose branches Mabella had first seen Mr. Bonham. The poor girl turned away from it with a sigh, while Felix, hardly able to forbear relating the act of heroism she had there performed, felt his blood rush unbidden to his cheek, and, as unbidden, retreat back again to his heart. A whisper ran round the room, that it was a view on the Normanburn estate, and some people thought it very indelicate in the Countess to have suffered the drawing to be seen. Luckily for Mabella, her aunt was all this time

engaged in examining the dresses of her neighbours; so that she had neither seen the pictures, nor the effect they produced.

The ladies now began to retire to dress for dinner; and Mrs. Bonhams, anxious to relieve Mabella, went up to their apartment, and took her with them. They said nothing about the pictures, being more desirous to see Mabella tranquil, than to encourage any irritable feelings in her; and, as their toilette was soon completed, they took her to her aunt's room, while they themselves went to Miss Moleson's.

Soon after the first dinner-bell rung, they all met in the drawing-room, where Lord Brushwood received them very formally; and whence, almost immediately, the whole party adjourned to the dining-room.

Mabella, who had held fast by Mrs. Mary Bonham's arm, found herself seated at table between that lady and a tall thin

gentleman, who was addressed by the name of Sir James; but she could not learn what she was to add to Sir James in speaking to him. On the other side of Sir James, sat a lady, not very young, but very affected, to whom Sir James confined his conversation, calling her Lady Corillia; and nearly opposite sat Mr. Bonham and Miss Trehern. As to the Lady Sniddys, they were at some distance, and so entirely occupied with the young gentlemen who sat next them, that they did not seem to observe any body else was present. The party was much too large for any general conversation, and each group enjoyed their own; so that Mabella was quite disappointed in the hope she had formed of hearing something amusing. She listened to distinguish what was passing; but, unless when Lady Brushwood spoke of the expected arrival of an Illustrious Guest, all was a sort of chaos; and Mrs. Mary, who saw

how she was employed, ate her dinner in silence, that she might leave her free to make her own observations.

She could not avoid letting them sometimes fall on Mr. Bonham, who, if he had heretofore seemed inattentive to Miss Moleson, now made ample amends by his assiduities; nay, so much and so deeply was he engaged in conversation with her, that, during dinner, he did not address himself once to Miss Trehern; and when she spoke to him, he replied politely and shortly, and again conversed with his cousin. Cecilia blushed, and looked pleased at what he said; once or twice, a tear, as it would seem, of tenderness started to her eye, and she more than once suppressed a sigh. Mabella had expected to see Mr. Bonham act as the lover of Miss Moleson, and she bore this scene with great fortitude. "This is as it should be," said she to herself; "and I will not be guilty of the crime of wishing it otherwise! Mr. Bonham is a *married*

man!" So deeply was she engaged in these reflexions, that when Sir James asked her to take wine, she started as if she had been shot; and when she raised her glass to her lips she forgot to look at the gentleman. Sir James elevated his eye-brows, and resumed his conversation with Lady Corillia.

Dinner passed without any remarkable incident or conversation; and the ladies then retired to an elegant apartment that opened to a lawn, beyond which was a landscape of great beauty. The Mrs. Bonhams led Mrs. Glassington and Mabella towards a sopha, where Cecilia and Miss Trehern were about to repose; and addressing the latter, Mrs. Mary said—

"I know how very kind you are, Miss Trehern, and as my friends are strangers here, I am sure you will shew them some of the beauties of the lawn and shrubbery: as to your inseparable, we are going to carry her off, having weighty matters to discuss." "Bless me, aunt! I am sure

Angelina may hear any of our discussions, so there is no need to closet me."

"That, my dear, you can't tell till you know what they are," replied the aunt; "and so, my dear, oblige me at once." Mrs. Sarah then took Miss Moleson's arm, and led her to her apartment, where, having fastened the door to prevent interruption, the good ladies renewed their intreaties to her, to oblige Felix by shortening her stay at Brushwood, and to accompany them home in about a fortnight. With a hesitation that seemed to proceed from regret that she could not oblige them, she said, "I believe it would have been better if I had pursued my original plan; but the truth is, that I have fettered myself by—by promises and engagements—and I cannot now go to York, however desirous of it."

"You know, Cecilia, that by staying here you are still delaying your marriage, unless you are married from hence!"—cried Mrs. Mary, rather indignantly:

"do you really mean to marry, or is it a mere delusion?"

"No—it is no delusion, aunt; I intend to marry, I assure you," said Cecilia, with a sigh.

"And when? I must know when," said Mrs. Mary—

"That too I have fixed," said Cecilia, blushing deeply. "I told Felix to-day that I should marry on the Monday after the races—that will be, I think, the 28th of August."

"To enable you to do that," replied Mrs. Mary, somewhat softened by Cecilia's evident emotion, "you and Felix must then be separated; *he* must go to York, if you will not."

"He can easily do that," said Miss Moleson. "Well, Cecilia! and when you do come down on the Saturday before the races, do you intend *then* to come to us, or will you be with Lady Brushwood?"

"I should wish to remain with my

aunt Brushwood—as Angelina, indeed, will go into lodgings—but—no—my cousins expect me to be with them."

"Then after all," said Mrs. Mary, "you do not intend to be married from our house?"

"Yes, my dear aunt, I do! I will come to sleep at your house on Sunday evening, and that will answer every purpose"—

"And does Felix approve this?" asked Mrs. Sarah—"I have not consulted him," answered Cecilia.—The two aunts remained silent some minutes; they saw that Cecilia had quite made up her mind on the business, and that nothing they could say would change her determination. Without replying, theh, to what she had said, Mrs. Mary told her, that it would give her pleasure, if, while they were at Brushwood, she would attach Miss Normanburn to her, by a few kind attentions. "I can see," continued she, "that your cousins, the Ladies Sniddy, vote both her

and her aunt invisible; but I am certain your heart and understanding, my dear Cecilia, are too good to follow their example, and scorn a poor girl, because others have her estate. She is not accomplished, but neither is she ignorant; and the unassuming elegance of her manners, as well as her exquisite beauty, must strike every unenvious mind. Will you oblige me, Cecilia?" Miss Moleson was really pleased with Mabella, and glad to oblige her aunts, who bore her odd behaviour so well; and she promised to take Miss Normanburn under her wing, and make her one of the juvenile party. Soon after, the ladies returned to the drawing-room, where they found Lord Brushwood and the gentlemen, and Mrs. Mary observed, that Felix, who was turning over a music-book, looked more than usually grave. Instead of joining his aunts and Lady Brushwood, or Miss Moleson and Mabella (whose heart smote her with reproaches for every kind attention that

lady paid her), he attached himself to Lady Corillia, and the Ladies Pleasance and Sophia; and when the former lady sung a song of her own writing and composition, he seemed quite absorbed in the pleasure she gave him. Music occupied a considerable portion of the evening, and when the concert ceased, Mr. Bonham took an animated part in a conversation with Lady Corillia and Sir James on theatrical amusements; in short, to the great astonishment of all who knew him, he did not once join those about whom he was most interested.

"Well, wonders never cease!" cried Mrs. Mary, "what can be the matter with Felix Bonham?"

END OF VOL. III.

BARNARD AND FARLEY,
Skinner-street, London.